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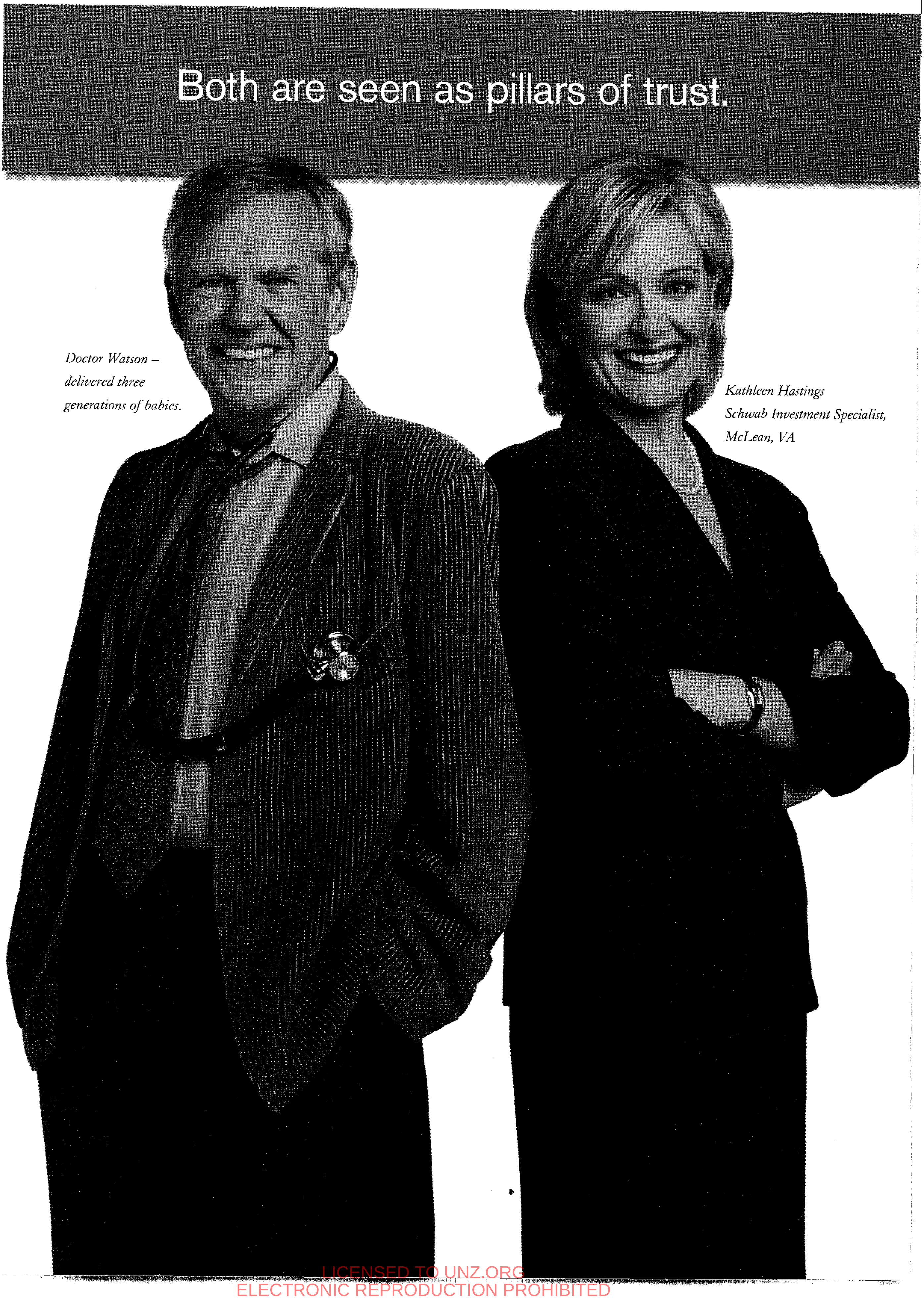
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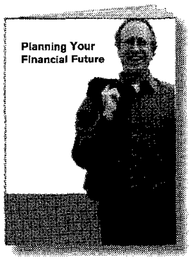

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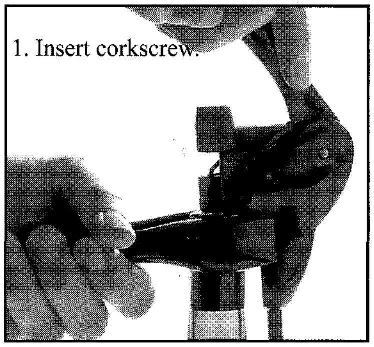

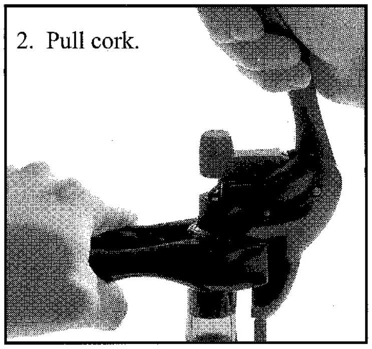

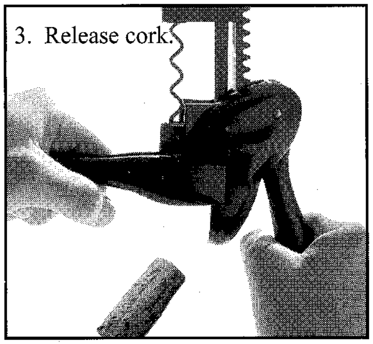

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THE NEW YORKER

JANUARY 14, 2002

6 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
29 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
The Times flips; the grief beat.

Ahmed Rashid 34 ANNALS OF TERRORISM
They're Only Sleeping
Why the threat lingers in Central Asia.
Ian Frazier 42 SHOUTS & MURMURS
Unbowed
Ian Parker 44 ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS
Golden Touch
A curator's big picture in Harlem.
Lawrence Wright 50 PROFILES
The Counter-Terrorist
An F.B.I. agent's obsession with Al Qaeda.
John Cassidy 62 THE WORLD OF BUSINESS
Striking It Rich
The years of easy money.
William Trevor 74 FICTION
"Justina's Priest"

THE CRITICS
Joan Acocella 80 DANCING
Pina Bausch and William Forsythe at BAM.
Julian Barnes 84 BOOKS
"Anthony Blunt: His Lives."
Peter Schjeldahl 88 THE ART WORLD
The new American Folk Art Museum.
Paul Goldberger 90 THE SKY LINE
The Oklahoma City memorial.
David Denby 92 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"Gosford Park."

POEMS
Adam Zagajewski 48 "Summer's Fullness"
60 "The Early Hours"

COVER *"New York City: 63 Miles," by Floc'h* THE BACK PAGE *"Newest Items from the Cooler Image," by Roz Chast* DRAWINGS *Alex Gregory, George Booth, Barbara Smaller, Edward Koren, Sam Gross, Frank Cotham, Lee Lorenz, William Haefeli, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Charles Barsotti, Danny Shanahan, David Sipress, Jack Ziegler, Tom Cheney, Robert Mankoff, J. C. Duffy*

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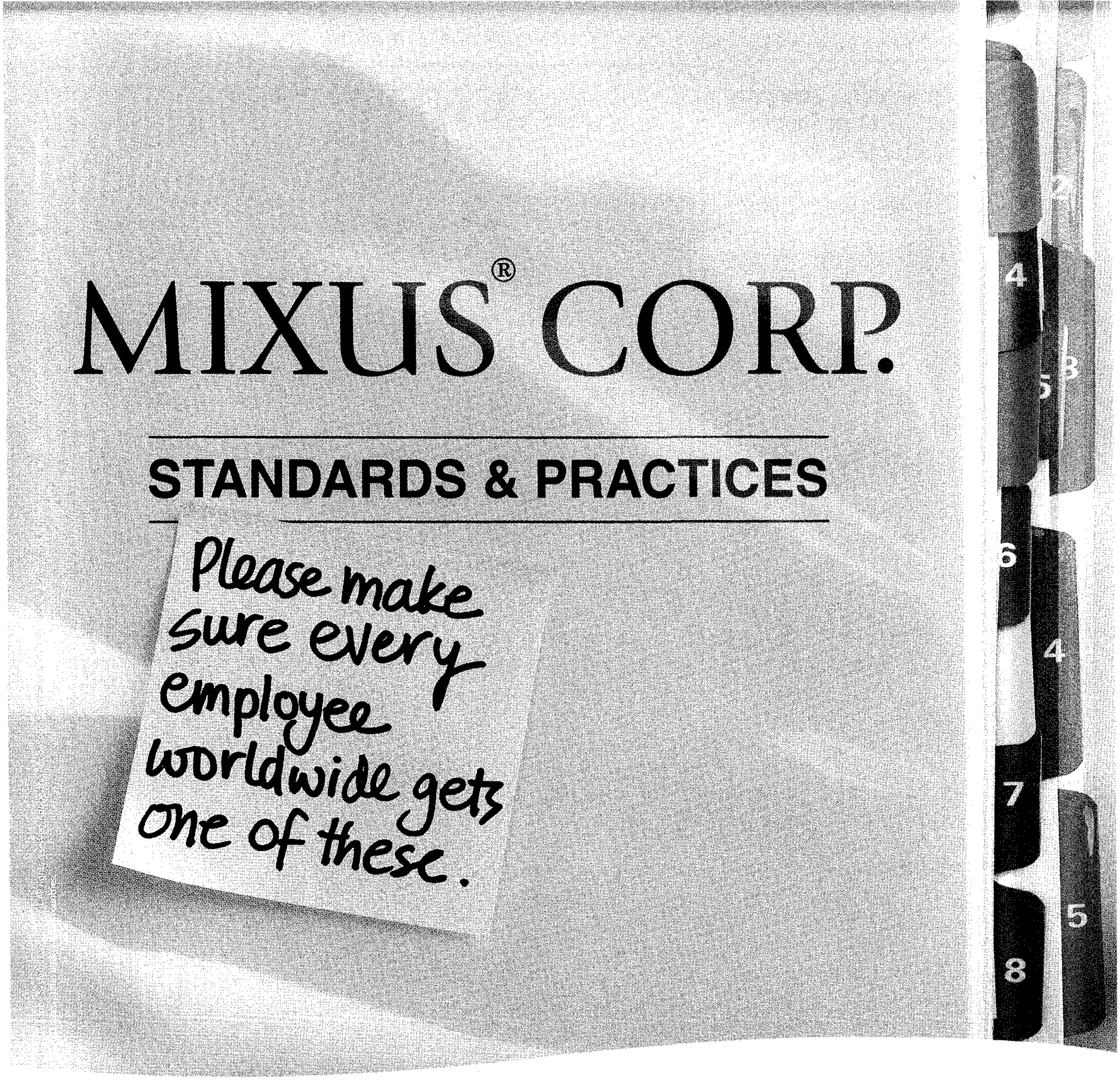
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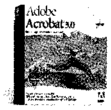

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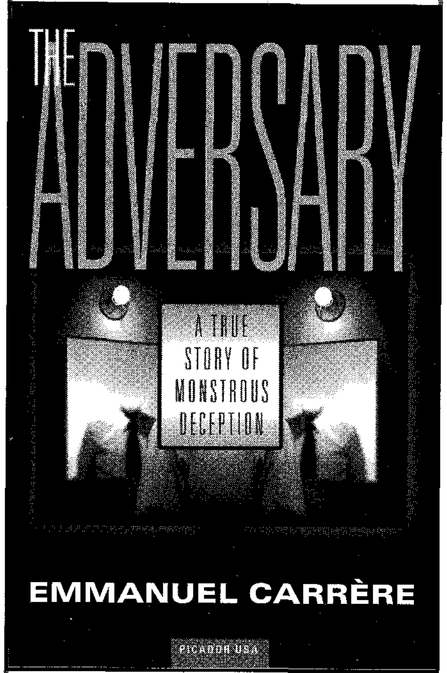

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CONTRIBUTORS

Ahmed Rashid ("They're Only Sleeping," p. 34) is the author of "Taliban." His new book, "Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia," comes out in February.

Ian Frazier (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 42) is the author of "Great Plains," "On the Rez," and "The Fish's Eye," a collection of outdoor essays, which will be published in April.

Lawrence Wright ("The Counter-Terrorist," p. 50) is working on a book about the events of September 11th.

Ian Parker ("Golden Touch," p. 44) is a staff writer.

Paul Goldberger (The Sky Line, p. 90) is a co-author of "The World Trade Center Remembered."

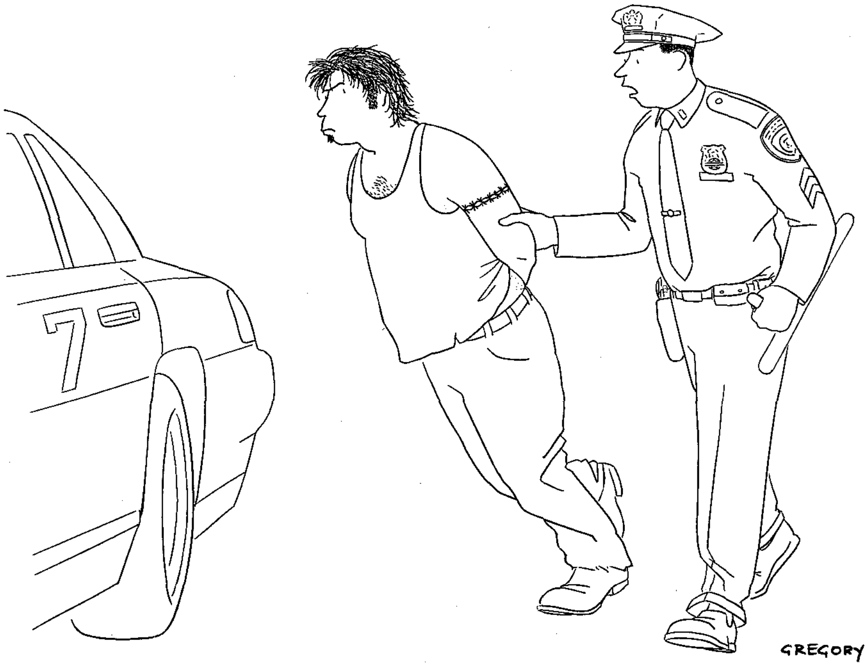
John Cassidy ("Striking It Rich," p. 62), who has been a staff writer since 1995, will publish his first book, "Dot.Con," next month.

William Trevor (Fiction, p. 74) is the author of fourteen novels and ten collections of short stories, the most recent of which is "The Hill Bachelors."

Julian Barnes (Books, p. 84) has been a contributor since 1989. His novel "Love, etc." is coming out in paperback in the spring.

Peter Schjeldahl (The Art World, p. 88) is an art critic for the magazine.

David Denby (The Current Cinema, p. 92) is a film critic for the magazine and the author of "Great Books." ♦



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THE MAIL

BEHIND ASHCROFT

Hendrik Hertzberg lists a number of steps taken by John Ashcroft since September 11th that erode civil rights (The Talk of the Town, December 10th), and he suggests that President Bush should reassure the public of his essential commitment to those rights—however compromised they may be in the short run—by firing the Attorney General. But is it right to see Ashcroft as aberrant? The President stands behind his actions, and Congress is at least as complicit: the Patriot Act, which takes aim at the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments, and probably at the Eighth, passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 357 to 66, and in the Senate by 98 to 1. Getting rid of Ashcroft would not save the Bill of Rights from our zealous legislators. That can be achieved only by mounting a political and judicial campaign in defense of our rights.

Richard Ohmann
Hawley, Mass.

THE ECONOMICS OF RACISM

Larissa MacFarquhar, in her Profile of Richard Posner ("The Bench Burner," December 10th), writes, "Posner argued against the notion that racial discrimination was bound to give way because it was economically inefficient. Some discrimination could be rational, he maintained, because it lowered the cost of gathering information"—an idea that, in Posner's hands, becomes part of a conservative agenda. But it is worth remembering that this concept was earlier deployed by liberal scholars. The point is that if you're an employer—even if you're not a racist—you might still avoid hiring black people if you learned that, on average, they had less education, needed more training, or didn't perform as well as other groups. This "statistical discrimination" saves employers the trouble of looking at people individually. Many adherents of laissez-faire economics insist that discrimination would fade away if the government would simply let the free market work. But it can be argued that statistical discrimination will not "give way" in the absence of government intervention. Liberals see this as a strong point in favor of affirmative action and civil-rights laws—not against them.

Edmund Levin
New York City

AFTER THE WAR

James Surowiecki argues that the role of foreign aid, in the form of Marshall Plan money, in reviving Western Europe after the Second World War has been overblown—by the time the Marshall Plan began, in 1948, he points out, most of the region's industrial infrastructure had already been rebuilt (The Talk of the Town, December 10th). What he ignores is the part played by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration at the close of the war and immediately afterward. The U.N.R.R.A., which was created in 1943 by the fledgling U.N. and supported by the Allies—including the United States and the Soviet Union—brought nearly four billion dollars' worth of food, medicine, tractors, generators, and other supplies to countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Millions of refugees were cared for through camps, training, and resettlement. U.N.R.R.A. operations in Europe were closed down in 1947 largely because of the political atmosphere: the onset of the Cold War had been signalled by Churchill's Iron Curtain speech, and the U.S. chose to forsake the U.N. program to initiate the Marshall Plan. Now, more than fifty years later, the Marshall Plan may get more credit than it deserves. But, as an example of the potential of international aid, the U.N.R.R.A. can offer a guide to—and an inspiration for—the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

Bea Silverberg
Cleveland, Ohio

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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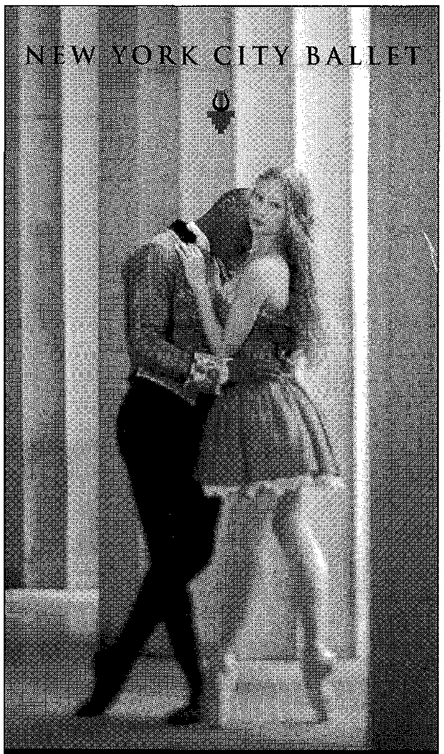

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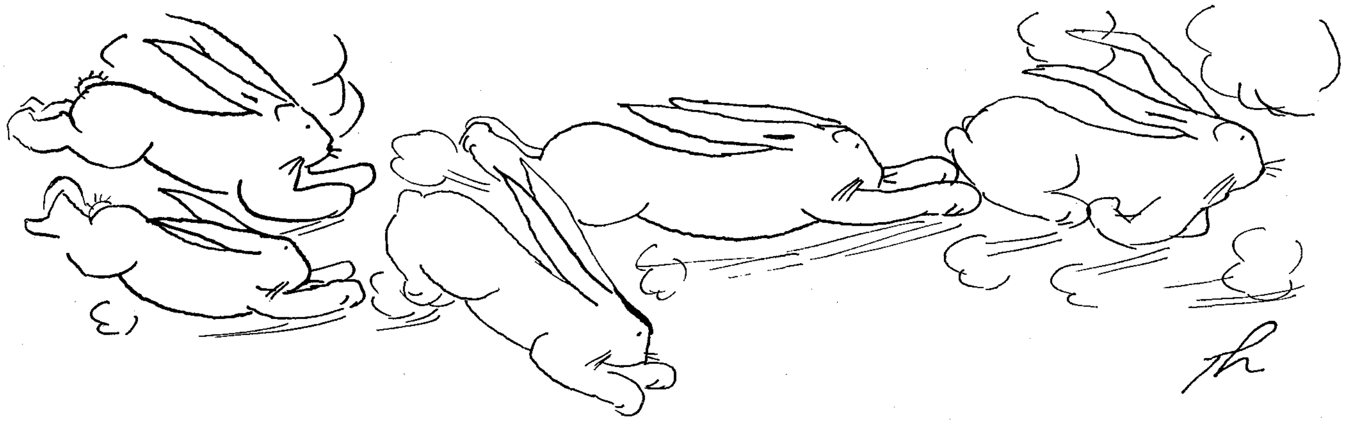
Janie Taylor and Albert Evans at Grant's Tomb, photographed by Rosanne Olson © 2001.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



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OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			9	10	11	12
13	14	15				

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

FURTHER FROM THE FURTHEST THING
After a volcano erupts, an isolated island community is evacuated to an industrial town, in a drama by the Scottish playwright Zinnie Harris. Previews begin Jan. 14. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

HOBSON'S CHOICE
An Atlantic Theatre Company revival of Harold Brighouse's 1915 play, starring David Aaron Baker, Brian Murray, and Martha Plimpton. Preview on Jan. 9. Opens Jan. 10 at 7. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

MARIA DEL BOSCO (SEX & RACING CARS: A SOUND OPERA)
The avant-garde playwright Richard Foreman's fiftieth play. Opens Jan. 10 at 8. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

MONSTER
Michael Greif ("Rent") is the director of a new play by Neal Bell, based on Mary Shelley's novel "Frankenstein." Previews begin Jan. 15. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

MOSTLY SONDHEIM
In her one-woman show, Barbara Cook performs the songs of Stephen Sondheim, as well as songs by his favorite composers. Preview on Jan. 13. Opens Jan. 14 at 7:30 and continues, Sundays and Mondays only, through Feb. 11. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

TAPE
From Naked Angels, Stephen Belber's play about three high-school friends who reunite in an East Lansing motel room. Geoffrey Nauffts is the director. In previews. (José Quintero, 534 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

TARTUFFE
The Worth Street Theatre presents a new version of Molière's comedy, written and directed by Jeff Cohen. The cast includes Gerald Anthony, Crista Moore, and the playwright Keith Reddin. Previews begin Jan. 12. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Duane St. 206-1515.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AND GOD CREATED GREAT WHALES
In this encore production, the quintuple threat Rinde Eckert (writer, composer, actor, singer, dancer), looking like a demented genius harnessed to a tape recorder, plays a composer who is desperate to finish his opera, based on "Moby-Dick," before his memory gives out. The composer and his muse (Nora Cole), who wears a red whalebone corset and turns out to be a bit of a siren, act out scenes from the work, which promises to be fine and harrowing—Queequeg's song, hornpipes, Ahab's entrance. Inevitably, though, it runs adrift, as if the composer had embarked on one of Melville's grand digressions and lost the thread. (45 Bleecker Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 253-9983. Closes Jan. 13.)

BRUTAL IMAGINATION
The playwright Cornelius Eady and the composer Diedre Murray's latest collaboration concerns the notorious case of Susan Smith, who in order to cover her own crime of murder claimed an unknown black man had abducted her children. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303.)

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)
Three actors perform thirty-seven plays and a hundred and fifty-four sonnets in under two hours. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE OF DEATH
As a couple about to celebrate—if that's the right word—their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, Helen Mirren and Ian McKellen square off in Strindberg's depiction of the blasted heath of matrimony, and they do battle magnificently. Their attacks on each other are so predictable and so regular that you laugh as often as you wince. Mirren, playing a former actress (if there is such a thing as a former actress), is droll and wicked, and McKellen, in his deep embrace of the role of an army captain who comes face to face with his own mortality, is a life force; as a presence onstage, he is the sound of two hands clapping. Directed by Sean Mathias; also with David Strathairn. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/22/01.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 13.)

ECCO PORCO
A persecuted pig is the focus of the latest show from the interdisciplinary troupe Mabou Mines, written by Lee Breuer and starring Ruth Maleczech and Frederick Neumann. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

45 SECONDS FROM BROADWAY
Neil Simon is in his element in his new comedy, which is part love letter, part elegy to a Broadway that ain't what it used to be. It's set in the legendary coffee shop of the Edison Hotel, in the heart of the theatre district, and while Simon has the dynamics of the place right the humor here is superficial and stale—it's canned chicken soup whose expiration date has long passed. (11/26/01) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. Closes Jan. 13.)

GOOD THING
The New Group presents a drama by Jessica Goldberg, in which a young woman's attempt to recapture her past jeopardizes the lives of two couples. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes Jan. 13.)

HEDDA GABLER
This "Hedda," starring Kate Burton, is all surface brightness—it twinkles rather than burns. Jon Robin Baitz's colloquial adaptation of Ibsen's drama leaves little room for shading or depth, and the entire cast suffers under Nicholas Martin's heavy-handed and misguided direction, as does the audience. (10/22/01) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 13.)

HOMEBODY/KABUL
Tony Kushner's latest play, set in London and in Kabul in 1998, about a woman who becomes obsessed with Afghanistan. Declan Donnellan is the director. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

MAMMA MIA!
This smorgasbord of song, the brainchild of Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, the male half of the seventies supergroup ABBA, is nothing but hokum—a chucklehead pleasure. Andersson and Ulvaeus have shrewdly allowed their platinum hits to be sent up by a story that pits the impudence of youth against the resilience of middle age. Catherine Johnson's book, which is simply a slick cartoon that connects the dots between ABBA's No. 1 singles, asks the question: Can twenty-year-old Sophie, the daughter of a hippie dropout who was the leader of a girl group called Donna and the Dynamos, find out which of the three men she's invited to her wedding is her real father? Though the show is cunningly directed by Phyllida Lloyd and given the proper vulgar acrylic touch by the designer Mark Thompson, the question—a multimillion-dollar McGuffin—remains unanswered. (11/5/01) (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.)

MARC SALEM'S MIND GAMES, TOO
Save the cash you were planning to spend on that psychic and instead purchase ninety minutes with the "mentalist and mind artist" Marc Salem, who claims that his highly entertaining act is both hocus-pocusless (anyone can do it, he claims—if they study the human mind for thirty years) and seamless (he offers $100,000 to anyone who discovers a wire). He'll make no promises about your

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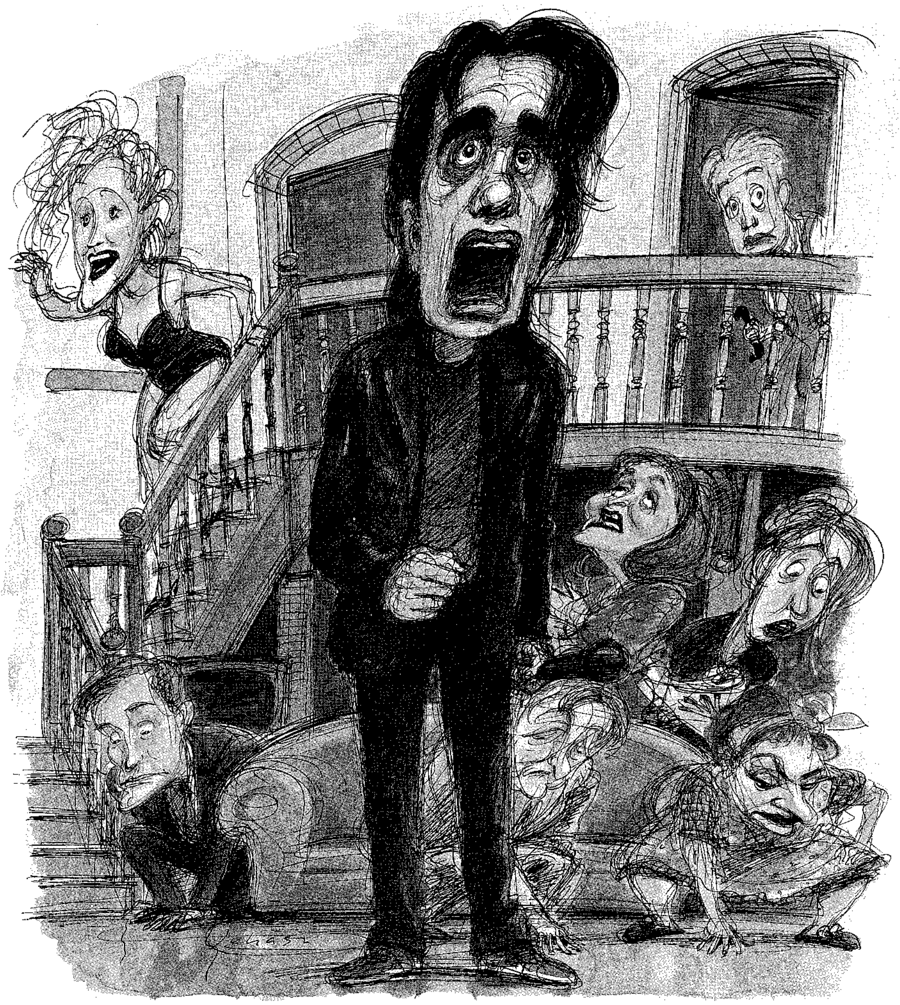
future; the fun comes from the fact that his fascinating "tricks" seem like magic and from trying to figure out how in the world he does them. At times you feel like you're the only person in the audience who isn't a plant. (Duke Theatre, 229 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 13.)

NOISES OFF

Jeremy Sams's revival of Michael Frayn's 1982 backstage comedy, a farce within an antic farce, is blissful fun. As the dysfunctional troupe of the travelling show "Nothing On," all the members of the excellent cast—Patti LuPone, Peter Gallagher, Richard Easton, Faith Prince, Edward Hibbert, Katie Finneran, T. R. Knight, Thomas McCarthy, and Robin Weigert—shine in roles that lesser comedians would surely find daunting. Frayn's construction requires spot-on comic timing, and with the help of Sams, this production delivers it—and then some. The laughs rumble through the audience from start to finish. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)



Peter Gallagher and the cast of "Noises Off," by Michael Frayn, at the Brooks Atkinson.

VICTOR JUHASZ

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS

It's one thing for a man to develop the ability to stretch his scrotum until it's the size of a dinner plate, but another to share this talent with the world. These two Australians, Simon Morley and David (Friendy) Friend, profess embarrassment at the success of their "little pub show," but it's still a con: fifteen minutes into their act they are utterly naked and out of ideas. They can't go on, but they do. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

SEXAHOLIX . . . A LOVE STORY

"A little coitus / Never hoit us," John Leguizamo jokes in his third one-man Broadway show, a crowd-pleasing hip-hop account of sexual escapades. Starting with the wacky impoverishment of his Colombian-Puerto Rican childhood and ending with proud parenthood as the father of two "Jewricans," Leguizamo is noisy, funny, inventive, and sweet. He brings new sounds, new moves, and a new audience to the Great White Way. (He even dances in the aisles.) Next time, though, he'd do well to bring new material, too. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

Gretchen Mol, Paul Rudd, Rachel Weisz, and Frederick Weller are in the cast of the Almeida Theatre Company staging of Neil LaBute's latest play. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 20.)

[SIC]

Three struggling downtown twentysomethings live on the same floor in cubicles trying to pass as apartments, where they sidle around each other emotionally as well as physically. The thirty-six-year-old playwright Melissa James Gibson gives them a steady, if disjointed, torrent of clever things to say, with a lot of self-consciously odd rhythmic pauses built in. But Pinter it's not. When the characters stop their noisy self-absorption long enough to eavesdrop on the troubled couple in the large apartment below (an intriguing bit of stage design by Louisa Thompson), it turns out there's a better play going on down there. Directed by Daniel Aukin, the acting is good, especially by James Urbaniak, whose wry projection wrings the most out of his lines. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 206-1515. Closes Jan. 18.)

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

In the terrifically engaging opening scene of Andrew Bovell's play, in which four characters are talking almost simultaneously, no one is possessed and no one is blathering. They are all, however, on the verge of cheating on their spouses. Mark Clements has directed Bovell's fuguelike script with wit and command, so everyone, the audience included, gets the sincere, if desperate, attempt to communicate. After the flashy opening, the playwright's motifs of loneliness, betrayal, and need complicate, interweave, and deepen. Characters only speculated about in Act I become flesh in Act II, others are introduced, one reappears. The players—Karen Allen, Kevin Anderson, Margaret Colin, and Michel R. Gill—have the chops to pull off all nine parts impressively, so every scene delivers an unexpected wrinkle, an unfolding surprise. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100. Closes Jan. 20.)

THE STREETS OF NEW YORK

Charlotte Moore's musical adaptation of the nineteenth-century Irish playwright Dion Boucicault's drama. (Irish Rep, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Jan. 20.)

SUMMER OF '42

A musical adaptation of the 1971 movie, which was based on Herman Raucher's coming-of-age novel of the same title. With a book by Hunter Foster and music and lyrics by David Kirshenbaum. Gabriel Barre is the director and choreographer. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL

This one-man show, written by Glen Berger and performed by T. Ryder Smith, manages to be both a funny tale of a Dutch librarian's midlife crisis and a serious, intriguing look at the value of any one life. After a book is returned to the library a hundred and thirteen years overdue, the librarian becomes obsessed with finding out how and why. He eventually comes to believe that the Wandering Jew was the errant borrower, whose late return of the volume is one of a series of clues he's left in a desperate attempt to document his existence. As billed, it's "An Impressive Presentation of Lovely Evidences." Directed by Randy White. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

URINETOWN

The amount of fun to be had at this musical, by Greg Kotis (book and lyrics) and Mark Hollmann (music and lyrics), is in direct proportion to the unpleasantness of its title. Its central idea is that an evil corporation controls all the toilets in a city that bears some resemblance to New York, but the show is really no more and no less than a terrifically spirited sendup of musicals and their conventions, as self-conscious and gag-happy as a Warner Bros. cartoon (not only does a sign saying "Secret Hideout" hang above a secret hideout; the sign has an arrow on it). (10/1/01) (Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE

The Mint Theatre carries on its mission to present worthy but neglected old plays, this time a Keen Company production of the 1943 comedy by John van Druten ("I Am a Camera," "I Remember Mama"). It's a sophisticated love triangle involving two New York actresses and a G.I. awaiting assignment in the early days of the Second World War. The characters are adrift, pursuing fame or fulfillment or a gay old time with no strings attached. It's all informed by the awareness of a dangerous, uncertain future, and the seemingly frothy dialogue packs a surprising resonance. The handsome cast—Elizabeth Bunch, Nick Toren, and Megan Byrne—provide just the right mixture of sweetness, sass, and sincerity. (Mint Theatre, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-0231. Closes Jan. 20.)

WHERE'S MY MONEY?

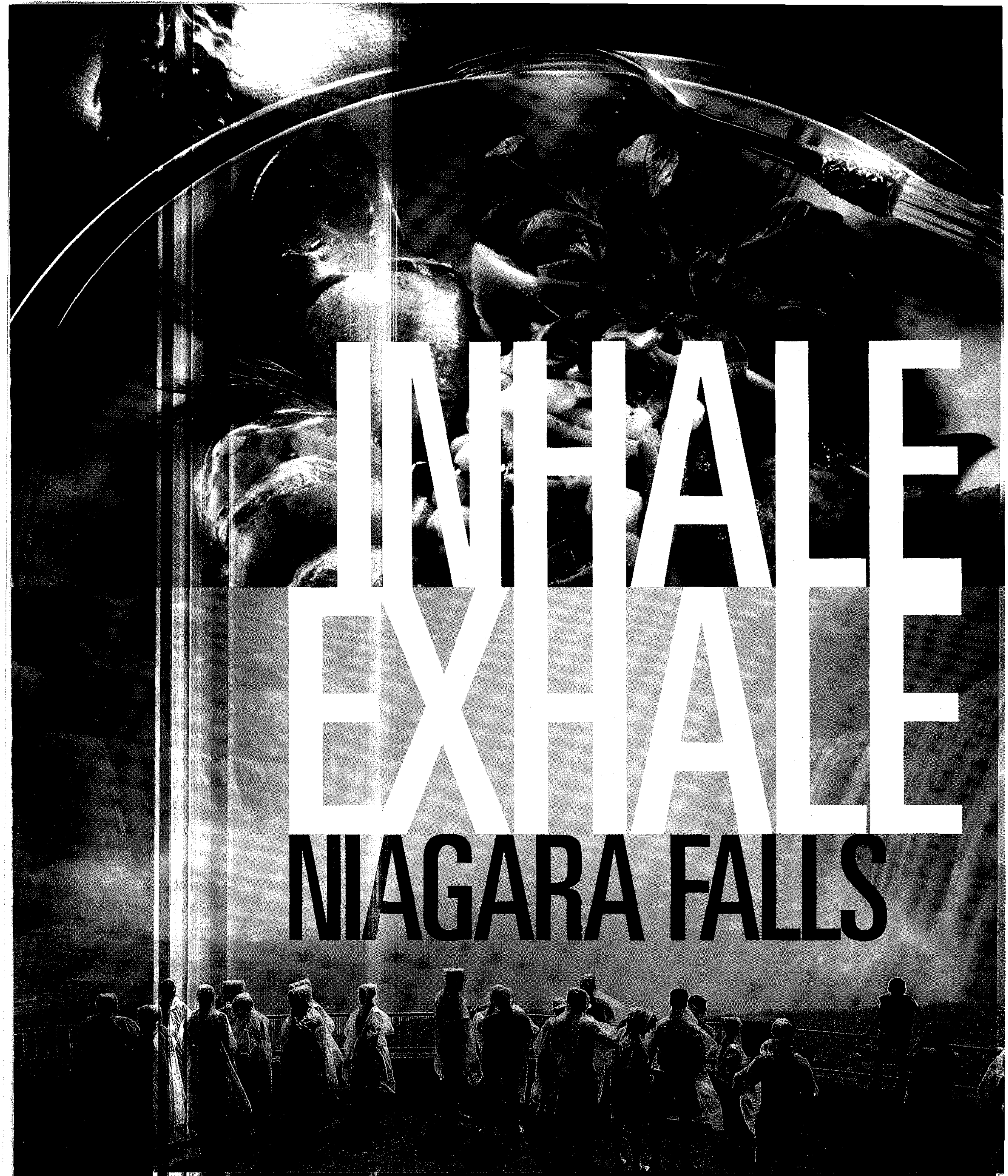
A dark comedy by John Patrick Stanley, about two bush-league divorce lawyers from Brooklyn. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Jan. 13.)

WHY CLEANING FAILS

In her latest play, Deb Margolin investigates the tyranny of housekeeping. Jan. 11-13 at 7:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202.)

THE WOMEN

The director Scott Elliott begins Clare Boothe Luce's 1936 satire, about a coven of pampered Park Avenue ladies and the maliciousness that is their ozone, with a tableau of the cast (which includes Kristen Johnston, Rue McClanahan, Cynthia Nixon, Jennifer Tilly, Mary Louise Wilson, and Jennifer Coolidge) massed in front of Derek McLane's somewhat anachronistic New York skyline. At the finale, up to his old, foolish game of deconstruction, he has



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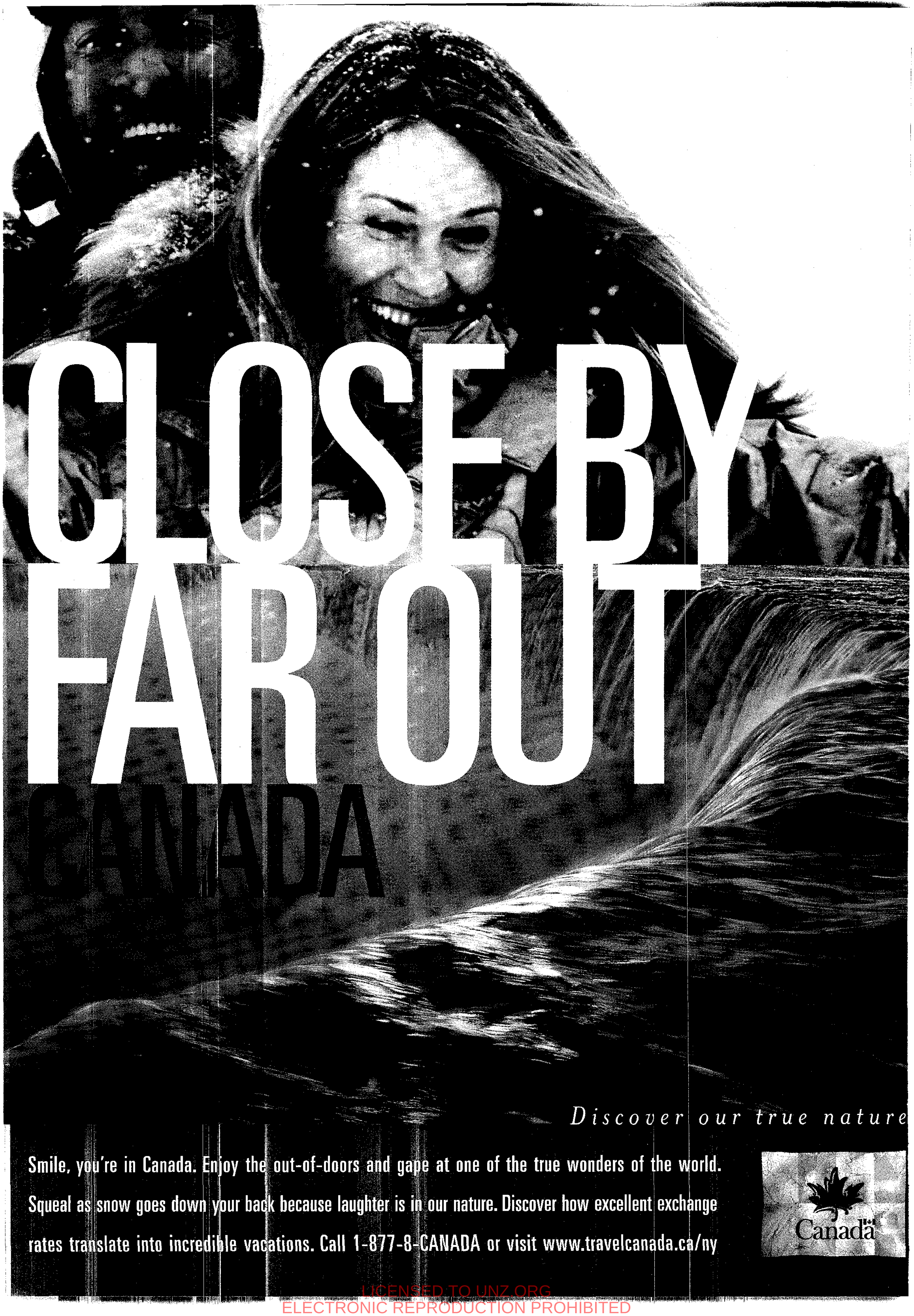
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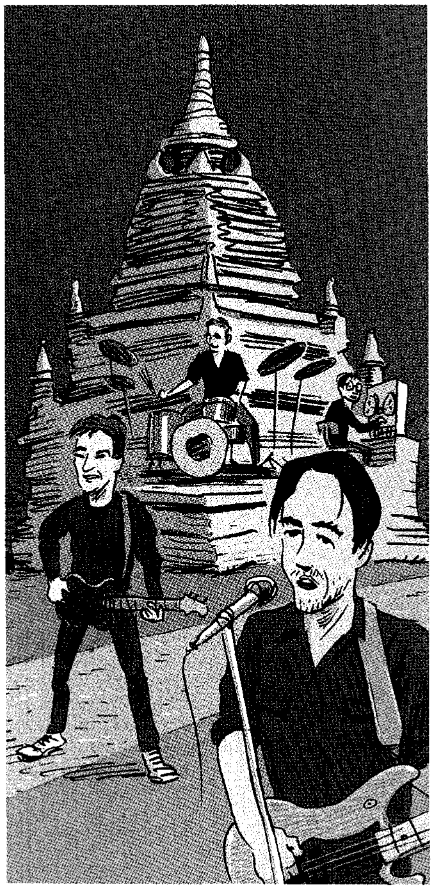
the ladies take their bows in a sort of fashion-show parade of period lingerie. This catwalk sight gag, which is meant to indicate that the women have been laid bare, in fact indicates that the director doesn't trust the import of his comedy. Luce's fury is whipped to a froth, and bubbles literally rain down on the cast. "The women who inspired this play deserved to be smacked across the head with a meat-ax," Luce wrote. However, in this production we're the ones who are hit on the head, with the blunt instrument of Elliott's theatrical imagination. With costumes by Isaac Mizrahi. (11/19/01) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300. Closes Jan. 13.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.
BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.
CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.
CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.



Mission of Burma, at Irving Plaza.

DOUG ALLEN

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.
THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.
FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.
42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.
I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.
THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
LOVE, JANIS
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.
PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.
THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.
THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.
TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
Jan. 9 at 8: "Dances at a Gathering" and "Symphony in C." ♦ Jan. 10 at 8: "Telemann Overture Suite in E Minor," "Valse Triste," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," and "La Sonnambula." ♦ Jan. 11 at 8: "Dances at a Gathering" and "The Four Seasons." ♦ Jan. 12 at 2: "The Four Temperaments," "Zakouski," and "The Four Seasons." ♦ Jan. 12 at 8: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Duo Concertant," "La Sonnambula," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Jan. 13 at 3: "Soirée," "Zakouski," "La Sonnambula," and "The Four Temperaments." ♦ Jan. 15 at 8: "Dances at a Gathering" and "Cortège Hongrois." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 870-5570. Through Feb. 24.)
"ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT"
The annual festival of contemporary dance. **Merián Soto Dance and Performance** offers an evening-length suite of dances to *son* (the popular song and dance style that is the granddaddy of salsa) and salsa music performed live by a nine-piece band. In the lyrics to one classic Cuban *son*, a suitor says to the lady of his hope and lust, "At your doorstep, the watch in my pocket stops." Soto makes the most of such double-entendres. In one solo, she dips and swerves to a medley of naughty songs while, on a screen behind her, scenes from Mexican movie musicals parody Hollywood stereotypes. "I think contemporary dance is sometimes only about the pleasure of the mind, not the body," Soto says. "Here, it's both." Jan. 9 and Jan. 11 at 8 and Jan. 12 at 2. ♦ **David Dorfman and Dan Froot:** Jan. 10 and Jan. 12 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 2 and 7:30. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)
"PRIVATE LIVES OF DANCERS"
"We know that the reason the ballerina falls to the floor in Balanchine's 'Serenade' is because somebody tripped in rehearsal," says the antic post-modern choreographer David Gordon. "Balanchine told." In his "new and used duets," Gordon pulls the same sort of prank. "Lately, I've been listening in on the conversations dancers have when they're warming up and, say, we're bombing Afghanistan. In 'Private Lives of Dancers,' you see the everyday junk that has usually disappeared by the time the audience arrives becoming the pristine object, from moth to butterfly—all the stages." (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Jan. 10-13 at 8:30. Through Jan. 20.)

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Alice Munro
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AND: A calendar of *New Yorker* events across the country

ALL THIS JAZZ

Best jazz albums of 2001.

LAURENT CILLUFO

Jason Moran, "Black Stars" (Blue Note)—A twentysomething pianist and his dew-fresh rhythm section hook up with Sam Rivers, a seventysomething avant-garde icon, to produce the year's most engaging jazz recording. The still spry Rivers contributes saxophone and flute passages that inspire the youngsters to edgy flights of lyrical abandon. A heartening example of youth and experience creatively pushing each other to new heights.

Shirley Horn, "You're My Thrill" (Verve)—Nobody does it better, or at least more discreetly. The doyenne of female jazz singers never has to raise her voice to command total attention, extracting the big emotions from a near whisper. Her trusted ally in this aural seduction is the veteran arranger Johnny Mandel. Horn remains the model of controlled swing: unimpeachable and inimitable.

Vijay Iyer, "Panoptic Modes" (Noir)—Iyer is an extravagantly gifted new-jazz pianist and a quick-witted composer, but his greatest strength is his skill as a bandleader. On this captivating quartet recording, he establishes a lock-tight rapport with his energetic rhythm section and a cognitive interaction with the alto saxophonist Rudresh Mahanthappa, another talent to keep a steady eye on.

Bob Belden, "Black Dahlia" (Blue Note)—The famous Black Dahlia killing, in which a young hanger-on in nineteen-forties Hollywood was brutally murdered, got the novelist James Ellroy's juices flowing, and now it's stirred up the ambitious arranger, composer, and saxophonist Bob Belden. The gruesome circumstances inspired an evocative Belden soundscape that makes pungent use of big-band sonorities, Tim Hagan's cool-breeze trumpet lines, and sensuous saxophone musings from Joe Lovano.

The Classical Jazz Quartet, "Tchaikovsky's 'The Nutcracker'" (Vertical Jazz)—The reworked classical themes, while pleasing, are little more than sweet excuses for four extraordinarily supple mainstream players—the pianist Kenny Barron, the bassist Ron Carter, the drummer Lewis Nash, and the vibraphonist Stefon Harris—to shine as a team. Their empathy, understatement, unity, and mighty swing act as an unofficial homage to the glories of the recently defunct Modern Jazz Quartet.

John Lewis, "Evolution II" (Atlantic)—The mastermind behind the Modern Jazz Quartet died in 2001, but he left his own monument to improvisational elegance in this follow-up to the superb album "Evolution," from 1999. Equally striking, this low-key recital showcases Lewis's pared-to-the-bone piano playing, a refined and radical act of reduction which makes other pianists sound bloated by comparison.

—Steve Futterman

JAPAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE SHOWCASE
Four companies and a soloist: Study of Live Works Baneto in "A Time-Knit Sweater," Aki Nagatani and Danscapes in "Super Rinse," Dance Company Nomades in "Absent—The Plié Came down from the Mountains," Yukio Ueshima and Company in "Double Vision," and Mako Kawano in "My Boyfriend." (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Jan. 11-12 at 8.)

RONALD K. BROWN / EVIDENCE
The troupe performs repertory works, "Ebony Magazine: To a Village," "Upside/Down," and "High Life." (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7148.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

MC COY TYNER AND BUCKY PIZZARELLI
The pianist Tyner's chords still thunder, and his single-note passages continue to whip around the keyboard like a marathon runner. Like the drummer Elvin Jones, the other surviving member of John Coltrane's "classic quartet," Tyner may not be ageless, but he is growing older with defiance as well as grace. / Jazz guitarists come and go, usually in a flurry of flying fingers, but Pizzarelli has been with us for nearly six decades. A meticulous craftsman and an elegant stylist, he's a living link to such guitar pioneers as Django Reinhardt, George Van Eps, and George Barnes; there's not a standard or swing tune his seven-string instrument hasn't spun into pure gold. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Jan. 10 at 8.)

BORAH BERGMAN AND THE MARTY EHRLICH-MYRA MELFORD DUO
Bergman is the kind of pianist who sends a warning chill up the spine of other pianists, that is, if they give his recordings a chance. As committed to avant-garde improvisation as he is technically adept, Bergman coaxes from his instrument astonishing passages marked by gnarly harmonic thickets and melodic mazes. He's a phenomenon whose live appearances are treasured by his discerning admirers. / The 1999 album "Yet Can Spring" introduced a sparkling duo featuring two trusty new-jazz instrumentalist-composers: the multi-reeds player Marty Ehrlich and the pianist Myra Melford. Their repertoire finds room for spiky and poetic originals as well as tunes by Robin Holcomb and the great Chicago blues pianist Otis Spann. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Jan. 10 at 8.)

"SINGERS OVER MANHATTAN"
Jazz at Lincoln Center presents a double bill of **Andy Bey** and **Barbara Carroll** in the Kaplan Penthouse. Bey, the man who used to sing Horace Silver's love-peace-and-tolerance lyrics back in the seventies, has reinvented himself as an über-romantic. Letting ballads soak luxuriously in his plush voice and setting them off with just-right piano chords, he sets a deep-blue mood of languor, longing, and loss. / Those who luxuriate in Carroll's intimate recitals at the Bemelman's Bar, where she regularly explores the byways of popular song through her agile piano work and cozy vocals, may not know that this ageless veteran was once a bebop baby during the music's mid-nineteen-forties heyday. Her nimble keyboard jaunts and hip repertoire reveal her pedigree. **Jay Leonhardt**, the funny and swinging bassist, accompanies her. (165 W. 65th St. 721-6500. Jan. 10-12 at 8.)

"ARTS ON THE HIGH WIRE"
Laurie Anderson, Don Byron, Joe Jackson, Suzanne Vega, The X-ecutioners, John Zorn, and other New York-based musicians, artists, and writers turn out to benefit the New York Arts Recovery Fund. The daredevil Philippe Pettit, who walked between the Twin Towers in 1974, will return to the high wire. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. For more information, call 366-6900, ext. 278. Jan. 11 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
The Brazilian vocalist Monica Salmaso brings a welcome gust of summer songs. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Jan. 11-12 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—Jan. 9: The former members of the Broadway show "Beatlemania." Jan. 10-11: In 1965, a tornado of a singer named **Koko Taylor** shook the rafters of Chicago's fabled Chess Records studios with "Wang Dang Doodle," her classic duet with Willie Dixon. As the reigning Queen of the Blues, she's won more W. C. Handy Awards than any other female blues performer—and at sixtysomething she can still shake a rafter or two. Sharing the bill is **Son Seals.** One of the leading figures of post-sixties blues, this son of an Arkansas juke-joint operator plays in the slashing, urgent style of his mentor, Albert King. The last few years haven't been easy on him; his wife shot him in the cheek, and he recently lost part of a leg to diabetes, but his latest release, "Lettin' Go," recently won the W. C. Handy Award for the Traditional Album of the Year. Jan. 14: **Junior Brown,** an Indiana cowboy with a deep voice reminiscent of Johnny Cash, impeccable guitar credentials, and a flair for songs about heartbreak, hillbillies, and fools. He's touring in support of his latest album, "Mixed Bag."

BLARNEY STAR
43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Jan. 11: The long-running Friday-night series of traditional Irish music celebrates its return to its downtown home with a show featuring the fiddler Brian Conway, the button accordionists James Keane and Patty Furlong, the uilleann piper Jerry O'Sullivan, the flute player Dermot Grogan, and the guitarist and singer John Dillon.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Jan. 11: The former Byrds front man **Roger McGuinn.** Jan. 12: **Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks.** At sixty, Hicks has probably lost all hope of being recognized as anything but a cult legend. One of pop's finest eccentrics, Hicks spent most of the sixties and seventies as a Bay Area subversive, making disarmingly pungent country-flavored rock and pushing acoustic music into uncharted territory. He basically sat out the eighties and most of the nineties, but over the past few years he's been reclaiming his dyspeptic niche in the rock-and-roll pantheon by touring sporadically and by producing an album last year, "Beatin' the Heat," which featured contributions by such pop luminaries as Tom Waits, Elvis Costello, Rickie Lee Jones, and Bette Midler. He's back on the road in support of his latest release, the concert record "Alive and Lickin'."

BROWNIES
169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Jan. 12: **Big Lazy,** the elegantly gritty instrumental trio led by the extraordinary guitarist Stephen Ulrich, plays beautiful music that evokes everything from truckers' romps to the haunting film scores of Bernard Herrmann.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Jan. 10: Early members of California's hardcore scene, the **Circle Jerks** specialize in a high-velocity strain of punk rock which found favor with bored suburban skateboarders and combat-boot-clad miscreants. Jan. 12-13: **Mission of Burma,** one of the most criminally undersung bands of the early eighties, broke away from the conventional punk aesthetic by inventively adding found sounds and prerecorded tape manipulation to their guitar assault. Their signature high volumes took a severe

toll, however, when the lead singer Roger Miller's debilitating tinnitus forced the dissolution of the band in 1983. Braving the ringing in his ears, Miller has reconvened the Mission for a handful of rare appearances, spurred on by a recent profile of the band in Michael Azerrad's celebrated tome, "Our Band Could Be Your Life: Scenes from the American Indie Underground, 1981-1991."

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—Jan. 9: The tabla player and d.j. **Karsh Kale.** Jan. 12-14: The Senegalese singer **Baaba Maal** is known for soaring melodies and churning percussion and lyrics that dabble in mystical imagery. His latest CD, the timeless and earthy "Missing You (Mi Yeewnii)," was recorded outdoors after dark in the seaside town of Nbunk, Senegal, with a band that included harps, balaphons, acoustic guitars, drums, and traditional instruments from all over Africa. For these shows he's performing in an acoustic setting, which is just perfect for the songs on the album.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Jan. 12: The Brazilian guitarist **Vinicius Cantuaria.** Jan. 13: Brooklyn's **Barbez** binds together *musette*, tango, and punk, to create Brecht-flecked café rock for sophisticated audiences. A small, potent Russian singer and an exquisite violinist (along with the occasional guest cellist and a dancer) add to the dramatic resonance. It's a multilingual, multinational pleasure guaranteed to satisfy your cultural wanderlust. Also on the bill is **Bee and Flower,** an intense New York quintet that plays darkly beautiful songs. Tasteful exotic touches such as the lap steel, viola, and xylophone push the band further into rich harmonic territory and away from more conventional rock aesthetics. With Baltimore's **Lovelife.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Jan. 12: The vocalist **Andrea Marcovicci** pays tribute to Gertrude Lawrence, Noel Coward's theatrical better half. Dining.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (997-4144)—Jan. 13: **Dianne Reeves** predates such new kids on the block as Diana Krall and Jane Monheit by years, but the authoritative vocalist has yet to find the identity that will eventually bring her a commensurate level of success. She shares the bill with the brainy and eclectic pianist **Brad Mehldau,** who, at a recent jazz benefit concert, found the guts of Billy Joel's "New York State of Mind"—no small feat.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Some guitarists are bent on cramming together as many notes as possible, but **Jim Hall** (here with his trio Jan. 10-12) plays the instrument with a jeweller's touch: a gorgeous chord here, a lyrical phrase there, a perfectly placed note ringing in luxurious space. Mondays: The **Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra.** A personal forum for its leader's skillful compositions, modernist arrangements, and fluid bop piano, the orchestra also has a guaranteed whirlwind of a soloist in Akiyoshi's husband, the tenor saxophonist and flutist **Lew Tabackin.** Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Jan. 13: **Monty Alexander** and **Les McCann,** two pianists who have mingled bebop flash with popular leanings, bring a touch of R. & B.-style levity to the Village's glitziest jazz club.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Jan. 13: The **Christian McBride** quartet. An extravagant instrumental talent who's still finding his way as a bandleader, the bassist McBride remains as besotted with James Brown as he is with Ray Brown; the tension between the funk and jazz traditions gives his work a delicious edge. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

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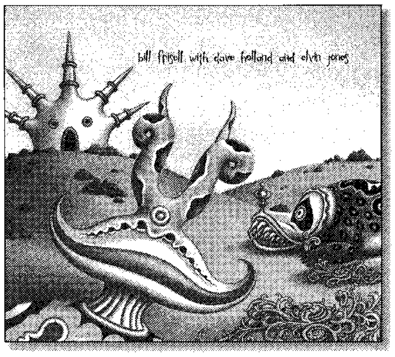
bill frisell with dave holland and elvin jones

NONESUCH

The guitarist is joined by two of the jazz world's finest improvising musicians in a trio set that features Frisell originals spanning the entire breadth of his catalog, plus interpretations of Henry Mancini's "Moon River," and Stephen Foster's "Hard Times."

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Pavone is one of the secret heroes of the New York City jazz scene. No matter the aggregation (the trumpeter **Steven Bernstein,** the saxophonist **Tony Malaby,** and the drummer **Michael Sarin** are his cohorts here), sharp arrangements jostle happily with vibrant improvisations, and there's always room for plenty of Pavone's own aggressive Mingus-inspired playing.

SMOKE

2751 Broadway, between 105th and 106th Sts. (864-6662)—Jan. 11-13: The **George Coleman** octet. Although he's a New York institution—when has he not been around?—the saxophonist Coleman is actually a proud son of Memphis, Tennessee; he's part of the nineteen-fifties jazz community that included Booker Little and Phineas Newborn. Coleman, whose tenor speaks an authentic, harmonically complex dialect that mates Southern grit with bebop finesse, put in some accomplished but strangely undervalued work with Max Roach and Miles Davis before branching out on his own some three decades ago. He's bringing in his persistent but little seen octet (it's been around in one form or another since the seventies) for what amounts to a belated celebration of the release of his 2000 album, "Danger High Voltage."

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Try this for a parlor game: name two jazz artists of the past four decades that **Buster Williams** (here with his quartet through Jan. 13) hasn't played with. Good luck. The bassist has worked with everyone worth working with since the late sixties—Miles Davis, McCoy Tyner, and the band Sphere, to mention just a few. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

Sixties-era prints of E. J. Bellocq's portraits of New Orleans prostitutes circa 1912, at Saul.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island"** sparks wonderment about the speck in the South Pacific whose remarkable civilization rose and fell during the thousand years before the first white man made landfall, on Easter Sunday in 1722. Only a few works in the show—including a smallish example (weighing twelve hundred pounds) of the great stone heads—predate that fateful event; the rest are mostly nineteenth-century wooden objects from a final efflorescence of native genius. The art has a familiar Polynesian look but is haunted by the memories of a dying race whose past included disastrous civil wars and the astonishing cult of the Birdman: each year, the island's leader was selected on the basis of a perilous quest for an egg of the sooty tern. Wooden tablets display Easter Island's unique written language, which remains undecipherable to this day. Through Aug. 4. ◆ **"Extreme Beauty: The Body Transformed"** traces ideals of beauty from head to toe (with notable detours at the neck, bust, and waist) and the gloriously absurd fashions that ensue in their pursuit. In the words of the designer Christian Dior, "My dream is to save women from nature." Curator Harold Koda contrasts recent examples of haute couture with artifacts from other cultures and historic periods, so a Commes des Garçons organza ruff about as large as an end table shares the stage with an elaborately beaded Masai collar. Across the room a sixteenth-century metal breastplate sits near a chrome and plastic full-body garment by Thierry Mugler (a hybrid of unitard and armor) which resembles the spawn of R2-D2 and Barbarella. Through March 17. ◆ **"Quintet of Remembrance,"** a handsome and pretentious video by Bill Viola, is the first work in its medium to enter the Met's collection. Through May 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The artist Ricci Albenda converts the lower level of the museum into three corridors, toying with perspective and playing spatial games in the gray area between architecture and sculpture. The first, a trompe-l'oeil mural of a corridor, greets viewers as they ride down the escalator. Around the corner, viewers find an actual corridor, the mirror image of the hallway depicted in the mural. A little further on, Albenda presents a shallow relief of the same image. This through-the-looking-glass installation recalls both the solemn James Turrell (of the crater in the desert) and the playful Viktor Vasarely (of the cubic illusions). Through May 21. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—For **"Brazil: Body & Soul,"** the Thomas Krens team has gone to new extremes, utterly transforming the museum and leaving one awed by the mega-exhibition's scope, design, audacity, and cost. The rotunda is now a Stygian theatre, with a massive baroque altarpiece in its center. From there, viewers ascend past ranks of polychromed Madonnas, carved lions, ex-votos, and tribal videos and arrive, finally, at a celestial ring of white rooms, where the baroque (which lasted nearly three centuries in Brazil) abruptly gives way to modernism. Through Jan. 27. ◆ **"Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People."** Through March 3. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The melancholy of small-town living may have a finer champion in Hopper, but if it's the latent menace of a clotted rural sky you want, Charles Burchfield's your man. This concise exhibition of works on paper, drawn from the museum's permanent collection, emphasizes watercolor, the medium for which Burchfield is best known, and the inclusion of several stilted engravings does little to alter that reputation. Rapture strikes when least expected, as a field of goldenrod becomes an exotic jungle of feathery stalks. Elsewhere, a shaft of white light transforms the trunk of a bare-branched tree in a cramped back yard into a celestial apparition. Through Jan. 20. ◆ **"Over the Line: The Art and Life of Jacob Lawrence."** Through Feb. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum,"** a modest blockbuster culled from the collections of the British Museum, opens with a group of rare wooden statuettes from the Old Kingdom. One of them still has a painted guideline running down the center of her torso. Equally fascinating is a drawing board, more than three thousand years old, with a mix of finished and practice motifs: a serene Pharaoh, a quail chick, and seven crude efforts at hands. But the show also offers plenty of moments of Ozymandian grandeur, among them a reclining lion in red granite (looking a good deal more formidable than his Fifth Avenue cousins) and a vast and trunkless head of Amenhotep III. Through Feb. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM

45 W. 53rd St. (977-7170)—The **"American Radiance"** exhibition arrays some four hundred items of folk art given to the museum by the president of its board, Ralph Esmerian. On view are some of the best of the best paintings by itinerant portraitists and landscapists, as well as Pennsylvania Dutch ceramics, decorated wedding documents, painted furniture, needlework, scrimshaw, and even walking sticks. The show is an epic poem of connoisseurship. Notice how the installation's design, in the museum's inventive new space, keeps everything distinct and alluring. Through June 2. ♦ **"Darger"** draws on the museum's immense holdings of works by the brilliant and worrisome Chicago recluse Henry Darger (1892-1973), whose usual pigeonholing as an "outsider" belies his genius. Beautifully composed and colored panoramas of children at play and, more often, at war illustrate Darger's fantasy novel "The Story of the Vivian Girls." His montage technique, involving traced images, looks ever less eccentric and more like a great innovation. But there is no gainsaying his psychosexual weirdness. Through June 23. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (849-8300)—With a soundtrack of clinking glasses and chitchat, **"Russel Wright: Creating American Lifestyle"** offers a convivial, appealing portrait of the pragmatic modernist (1904-76). Originally a theatre designer, Wright first experimented with domestic design at the urging of his wife, Mary. Their first collection of spun-aluminum pitchers and bowls led to a whole universe of smooth, rimless forms, from furniture and cutlery to the dinnerware line, American Modern, that was as ubiquitous in our parents' cupboards as it is on eBay today. Pioneers of name-brand marketing, the Wrights were ideologues, too, in a low-key, ardently sensible fashion: their "Guide to Easier Living," from 1950, is a manifesto of informality, envisioning a streamlined household utopia that seems to predict both "The Jetsons" and Martha Stewart. Through Sept. 15. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566)—The polymath painter Alfred Jensen, a contemporary of the Abstract Expressionists, drew inspiration from sources as varied as electromagnetic theory, the Mayan calendar, and the "I Ching." Jensen believed that brushwork disrupted the relationship between light and surface, so he squeezed paint directly from tube to canvas; his paintings have a gooey impasto surface. The prismatic palette, which he derived from Goethe's color theory, is limited to primary and secondary colors and black and white. The results resemble giant game boards with fathomless rules. Through June 16. ♦ **"Knots and Surfaces,"** an installation by Diana Thater, consists of sped-up video footage of honeybees flitting over colored hexagons. The images are projected across the floor and walls to create a kind of intermittent speckled effect. Nearby, a wall of stacked monitors features more bees, this time crawling languidly over marigolds. A gallery handout says that Thater is interested in recent scientific research about the way bees use movement to communicate with one another—Thater, alas, is no honeybee. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

JEWISH MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—Doug and Mike Starn's **"Ramparts Café"** offers visitors seats at only one table, a banquet-size Lucite case filled with transparencies of the Torah, the Koran, a Crusader's Bible, and the New York *Times*, as well as an accumulation of maps and documents that the Starn twins describe as "3,000 years of written accounts of the fighting over Jerusalem." The glass cups and ashtrays filled with Marlboro Light butts on the smudged top seem meant to evoke a friendly chat over the morning paper, but they're also reminders of stressful political strategy sessions and personal crises. Through Feb. 10. ♦ **"Ben Katchor: Picture-Stories"** pulls viewers into a world of deadpan oddity, full of sneakworm infestations, Mortal Coil-brand mattresses, smoke-cured undershirts, and shoes "made of apricot leather for the daughter of a Czar." Katchor's best-known comic-strip protagonist, Julius Knipl, Real Estate Photographer, is charged with documenting New York's streets and buildings. Like him, the Brooklyn-born Katchor records the passing of neighborhoods and their ways of life. His compelling drawings and graphic novels, for which he was awarded a MacArthur grant in 2000, appear here in the original and in prints and books, including "The Jew of New York." Through Feb. 10. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

MORGAN LIBRARY

29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)—Alfred Lord Douglas's red-leather letter box, a gift from Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), is the brightest thing in this exhibit of Wilde memorabilia, **"Oscar Wilde: A Life in Six Acts,"** which is packed with cards, reviews, and caricatures that are hard-pressed to conjure their subject's dramatic grandiosity. On the other hand, some subjects don't need much color—an edition of the first and only issue of *The Chameleon,* an Oxford literary magazine, lies open to Bosie's well-known lines about the love that dare not speak its name, next to a transcript of Wilde's eloquent courtroom defense against these charges. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Fridays, 10:30 to 8; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

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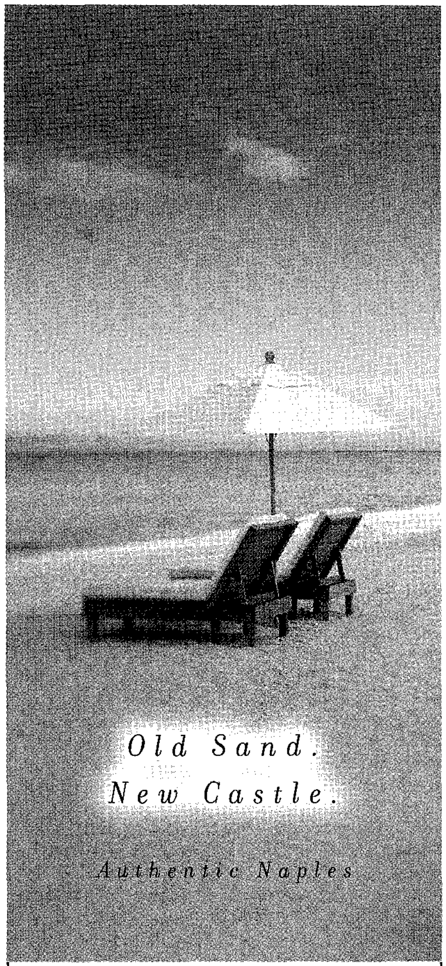

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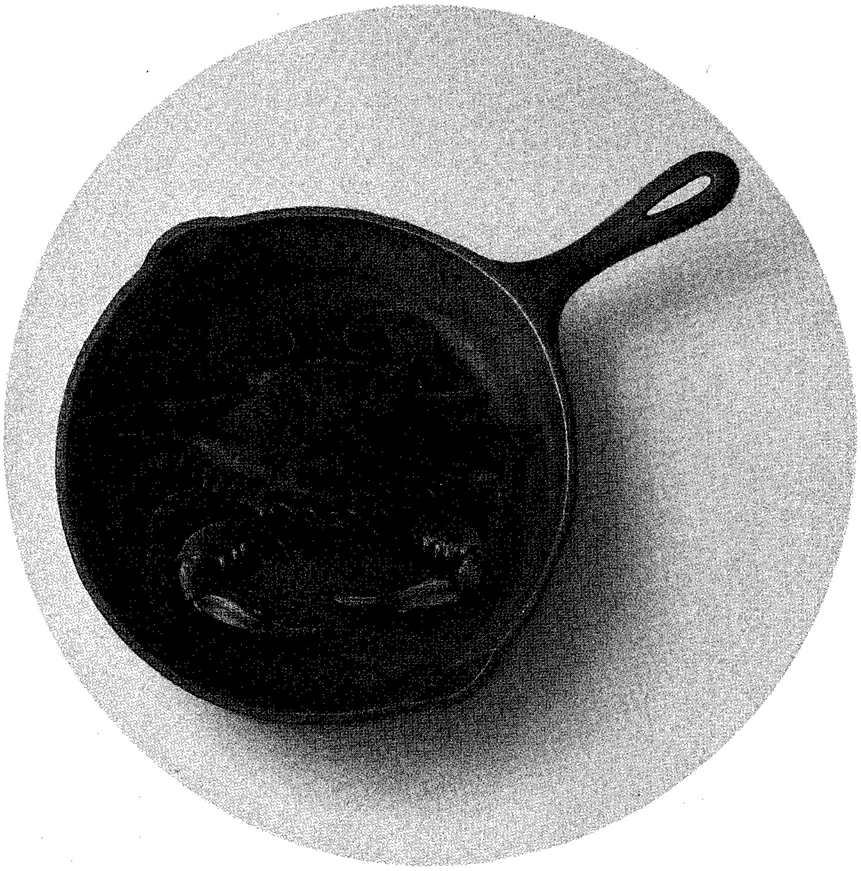
GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

CHARLES BURCHFIELD
A generous selection of watercolors and drawings shows the great eccentric (1893-1967) in his more plainspoken mode, closer to Edward Hopper than to Henry Darger. The earliest pictures on view sometimes succumb to a prosaic cheerfulness, but "March Sunlight Over Hills," from 1935, is a gaunt marvel, and "Wind," a view of dead trees being lashed by rain, seems to anticipate Frank Auerbach's stern, gusty vehemence. Through Jan. 26. (Kennedy, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 541-9600.)

BURGOYNE DILLER
Work from the thirties shows this trenchant disciple of Piet Mondrian working through original but hapless variants of Cubism to his final doctrinaire but splendid Neo-Plasticism. The show reminds us that there once really was an International Style, which could lift a struggling provincial to Apollonian peaks. Through Jan. 12. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082.)



"Crab in a Pan," by Wade Schuman, at Forum.

ANDY LENAGHAN
Over the past few years, Lenaghan has quietly shouldered his way into the élite (albeit unfashionable) club of hawkeyed realists which includes Rackstraw Downes, John Moore, and Richard Estes. He started out painting weedy, derelict areas of industrial Brooklyn; in that vein, this show includes a few seductively barren lots and an abandoned public swimming pool in Greenpoint. But the most impressive works are views of Manhattan: determinedly ordinary vistas of tarpaper, steel, and glass, painted with an exhilarating steadiness. Through Jan. 19. (George Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

WADE SCHUMAN
Schuman, who seems most at home painting fish and birds out of their natural elements, can be equally unsettling when it comes to the human figure. "Conversation" (1996) seats two morose men at a rotting still-life spread of eggs, fish, and other high-symbolism foods, as dark dogs circle the scene. In more recent works, the artist has stripped his models and set them upon one another. In one, a pale pair embracing in a hallway of an institutional-looking building seem unaware of the arrival of an elderly gentleman: it's hard to tell who is appearing in whose bad dream. Through Jan. 26. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545.)

DANIEL SENISE
Reared in Rio and based in Long Island City, Senise practices a sensuously sombre kind of collage. Using strips of cloth imprinted with flooring patterns, he makes spare, barren versions of architectural interiors. If the rooms look vaguely familiar, there's a reason: all were adapted from paintings by Carpaccio, De Hooch, and Hopper, among others. This appropriationist gambit seems both slight and sly, just substantial enough to give the pictures a hint of conceptualism. Through Jan. 12. (Ramis Barquet, 41 E. 57th St. 644-9090.)

"FROM GODDESS TO PIN-UP: ICONS OF FEMININITY IN INDIAN CALENDAR ART"
With all the giddy dazzle of a Bollywood movie comes this show of more than eighty examples of calendar art, the majority printed in northern India over the last forty years. The images are organized into categories whose straitlaced titles—"Woman Commoditized" or "The Unity of Opposites"—belie the garish Technicolor antics of the pinups themselves. Fans of farm girls may get a kick out of midriff-baring Miss Fertility 1975, who perches next to a couple of sacks of fertilizer while daintily brandishing a sickle. Other imagery is derived from the Hindu pantheon, such as a four-armed Lakshmi posed alluringly against a backdrop of oil derricks. Through Jan. 19. (IndoCenter of Art and Culture, 530 W. 25th St. 462-4221.)

"SILVER"
On the heels of Sperone Westwater's paean to green, the Castelli gallery offers an homage to silver—is it just a coincidence that both colors are synonyms for cash? Only Kiki Smith uses the precious metal itself, in a bowl embellished with casts of her

own fingers. Floating above this visual pun is a cluster of Andy Warhol "Clouds," inflated pillows of helium-filled Mylar. A Jeff Koons stainless-steel balloon would have been a playful counterpoint; instead we have his mordant stainless rendition of a baroque marble bust, ponderously installed next to a lunar "infinity net" painting by Yayoi Kusma. Through Feb. 2. (59 E. 79th St. 249-4470.)

"TRACES"
In collaboration with Arte y Ritual, a Madrid gallery specializing in tribal art, Krugier has put together a beautiful installation that pairs modernist and "primitive" objects and images. Wary of the controversy that tainted MOMA's "Primitivism" exhibition, in 1984, the curators don't try to overplay the connections. Instead their installation suggests open-ended affinities, leaving us to decide, for instance, whether a slender dancing Imunu figure from New Guinea is a spiritual ancestor of the Miró and Picasso figures that flank it, or just an evocation of a similar aerobic excitement. Through Jan. 19. (41 E. 57th St. 755-7288.)

Short List

ROY LICHTENSTEIN
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400. Through Jan. 12.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

JOHN MILLER / PAE WHITE / FRED WILSON
Three solo shows that are loosely connected by Pop psychedelia. Miller documents the aftermath of a Berlin rave in photographs from his ongoing "Middle of the Day" series, shooting beleaguered revellers in fluorescent wigs and homemade denim chaps in the hours between noon and 2 P.M. White hangs scores of mobiles made from disks of colored paper from the ceiling in a semi-circular flutter that suggests an airborne Polly Apfelbaum sculpture. Wilson veers from his usual political critique in a ribald sculpture of black-glass sperm (some fitted with cartoon eyes) installed on the wall above a bevy of waiting eggs. Through Jan. 12. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

XAVIER VEILHAN
Two grids of light bulbs (more than a thousand in each) programmed to play low-grade black-and-white film montages of a staring eye, a person dancing, a passing landscape, and flames. To see the images clearly, back up across Twenty-second Street. (A block away might be optimal.) Up close, the fluttering, shimmering light effects are pleasant, but the scalding heat emitted by all those incandescent bulbs is not. As usual with Veilhan, a veteran French conceptualist, one senses an elegant talent expending itself to nifty but inconsiderable ends. Through Jan. 12. (Gering, 534 W. 22nd St. 226-8195.)

Short List

JOHN AHEARN
Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474. Through Jan. 12.

ANTON VIDOKLE
Audiello, 526 W. 26th St. 675-9082. Through Jan. 19.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

"THE RUSSIAN ENDING"
Before the German novelist W. G. Sebald's tragic death, last month, a passage from his "The Rings of Saturn" was chosen as this show's epigraph, as if to emphasize the ways the English artist Tacita Dean's work echoes his rapt, ironic mournfulness. "The Russian Ending" consists of twenty photogravures from antique postcards of sinking ships, scarred battlefields, and other disasters. (It seems that Danish movies were once made with happy endings for the American market and sad ones for Russia.) The images bear scribbled mise-en-scène directions by the artist. Dean does familiar sorts of things—her postcard works are like pocket Kiefers—but she gives them an extra, satur-

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nine concentration that makes all the difference. Through Feb. 7. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

Short List

LYNNE YAMAMOTO / JUDY FOX
P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642.
Through Jan. 19.
TONY MATELLI
Koenig, 249 Centre St. 334-9255.
Through Jan. 13.

PHOTOGRAPHY

DAVID GOLDES
David Goldes, who studied molecular genetics in grad school, photographs tabletop still-lifes of childhood science experiments for a show he calls "The Elements." The images include miniature vortexes, electrified light bulbs submerged in water, and a pint-glass experiment on the density of ink and water which winds up looking like a black and tan. Through Feb. 9. (Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 414-0370.)

SEYDOU KEÏTA
From 1948 to 1962, Keïta ran a studio in Bamako, Mali, with an eight-by-ten-inch camera and some props: a radio, a Vespa, a patterned bedspread. Sitters came from all over the countryside wearing combinations of traditional flowing robes and Western dresses and suits, which makes for an arresting document of both African tribal culture and fifties mod style. Only within the past few years has Keïta, who died last November, begun to receive his due in America. These forty portraits provide a gorgeous introduction to the rarely seen work of the "image king of Africa." Through Feb. 2. (Sean Kelly, 528 W. 19th St. 239-1181.)

PERRY OGDEN
The photographer documented Francis Bacon's South Kensington studio—untouched since his death, in 1992—before it was carted off to Dublin for a museum re-creation. Ogden probes layer after layer of carved-up canvases and peers down into every box and paint can like a detective at a crime scene. It's not as elegant or succinct as Alexander Lieberman's "In the Studio" series, but the cumulative effect—reeling booziness—is more powerful. Through Jan. 26. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-3900.)

"8 X 10"
Ansel Adams taught Harry Callahan, who taught Emmett Gowin; all three shot in nature using eight-by-ten view cameras. None of Adams's work appears here, but the influence of his ruthless no-stone-unfocussed style is is palpable. Callahan modified the Master's manner by abstracting it, keeping his allover focus but making depth and scale uncertain to create a sense of instability. Gowin, while informed by both men, seems to be toying with our expectations: in his work, a pile of garbage can become a Martian landscape. Through Jan. 12. (Pace MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 857-0000—**"Another Vietnam: Pictures of the War from the Other Side"**; **"The First Snapshots,"** an exhibition of candids shot by amateur photographers in the eighteen-hundreds with the earliest Kodak cameras; and **"Hidden Truths: Bloody Sunday 1972"** all open Jan. 11. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

EUGÈNE ATGET
Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. 794-4444. Through Jan. 19.
PAVEL BANKA
Klotz/Sirmon, 511 W. 25th St. 327-2211.
Through Feb. 2.
E. J. BELLOCQ
Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 627-2410. Through Feb. 2.
BARBARA MORGAN
Silverstein, 504 W. 22nd St., 627-3930.
Through Jan. 12.
MASAO YAMAMOTO
Richardson, 535 W. 23rd St. 646-230-9610.
Through Jan. 19.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

DOYLE
Jan. 9 at 10 A.M.: "Fine Furniture, Decorations, and Paintings," an auction that also includes sales of silver, porcelain, and rugs. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN
Jan. 11 at 2: An introductory sale for new collectors, featuring a variety of prints, drawings, and posters, all at moderate prices. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
"Tosca," with Catherine Malfitano, Franco Farina, and James Morris; Daniel Oren conducts. (Jan. 9 at 7:30 and Jan. 12 at 8.) ♦ The first performances this season of **"Il Barbiere di Siviglia,"** with Ruth Ann Swenson, Juan Diego Flórez (a début), Dwayne Croft, John Del Carlo, and Simone Alaimo; Yves Abel. (Jan. 10 and Jan. 14 at 8.) ♦ Herbert Wernicke's exuberant new production of **"Die Frau Ohne Schatten,"** Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannstahl's bizarre, grandiose fairy-tale opera. The cast is led by Sue Patchell in the title role, Adrienne Dugger as the Dyer's Wife, Hanna Schwarz as the conniving Nurse, and John Horton Murray and Wolfgang Brendel as the heroically hapless men in their lives. Christian Thielemann conducts, coaxing luminous sound from the Met orchestra. (Jan. 11 at 7.) ♦ Verdi's **"Don Carlo,"** with Galina Gorchakova, Dolora Zajick, Richard Margison, Dmitri Hvorostovsky (a suave and dashing Don Rodrigo), Samuel Ramey (a commanding King Philip), and Paata Burchuladze; Valery Gergiev. (Jan. 12 at 1 and Jan. 15 at 7.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

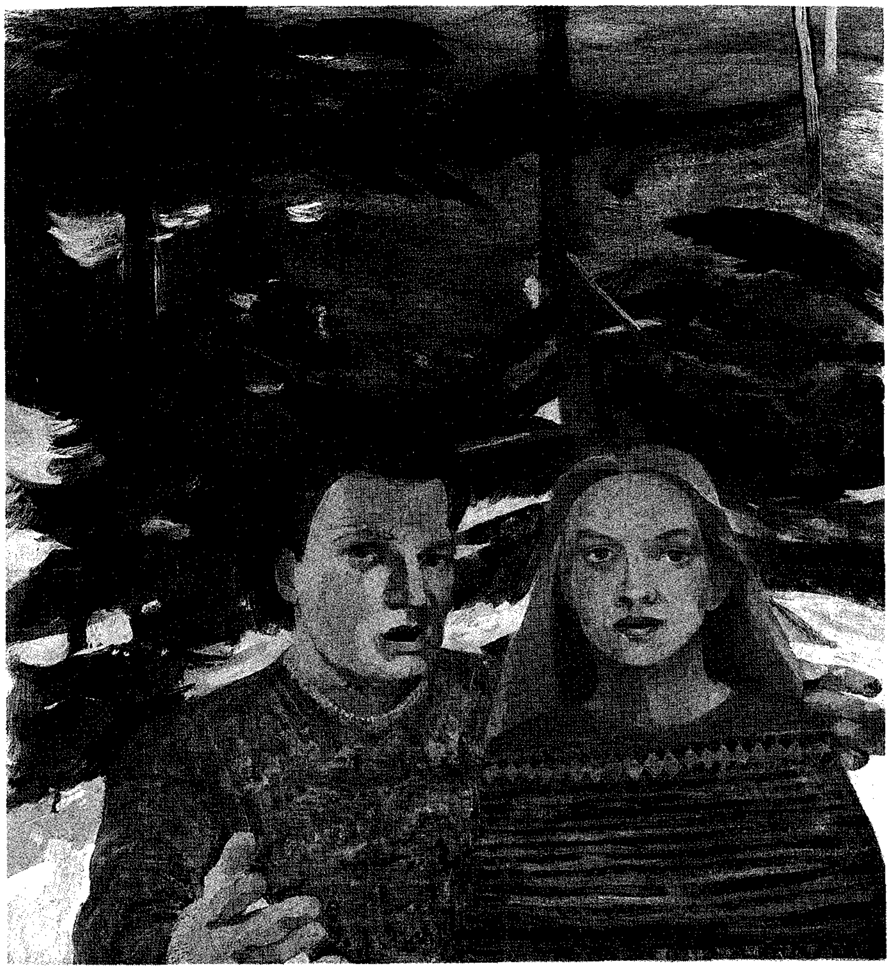
NEW YORK GILBERT AND SULLIVAN PLAYERS
Albert Bergeret conducts **"The Pirates of Penzance,"** the second installment of a three-show mini-festival devoted to the major Savoy operas, at City Center, the company's new home. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Jan. 11 at 8, Jan. 12 at 3 and 8, and Jan. 13 at noon and 4.)

BRONX OPERA COMPANY
These days Franz von Suppé, a distant relative of Donizetti, is known primarily for overtures (such as "Poet and Peasant") that sparkle with Viennese charm, but those overtures once had operettas attached to them. **"Boccaccio,"** a smash hit from 1879, receives its first New York performance in nearly seventy years, sung in English and conducted by Michael Spierman. (Lovinger Theatre, Lehman College, the Bronx. 718-960-8833. Jan. 12 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 2.)

HENRY STREET CHAMBER OPERA
The bold little company, which offers innovative productions of rarities in a nineteenth-century jewel-box theatre, presents an intriguing double bill of tragic love stories, one set among ancient nobility (Purcell's **"Dido and Aeneas"**), the other among the Gypsies of the Camargue (Milhaud's rarely performed **"Les Malheurs d'Orphée"**). (Harry De Jur Playhouse, Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 279-4200. Jan. 14 at 8. Through Jan. 22.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
The Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes believes that Lutoslawski's Piano Concerto—a silvery, ele-



RICCARDO VECCHIO

The husband-and-wife team of Paul Groves and Charlotte Hellekant performs Scandinavian songs in "Song of the Midnight Sun," at Weill Recital Hall on January 9.

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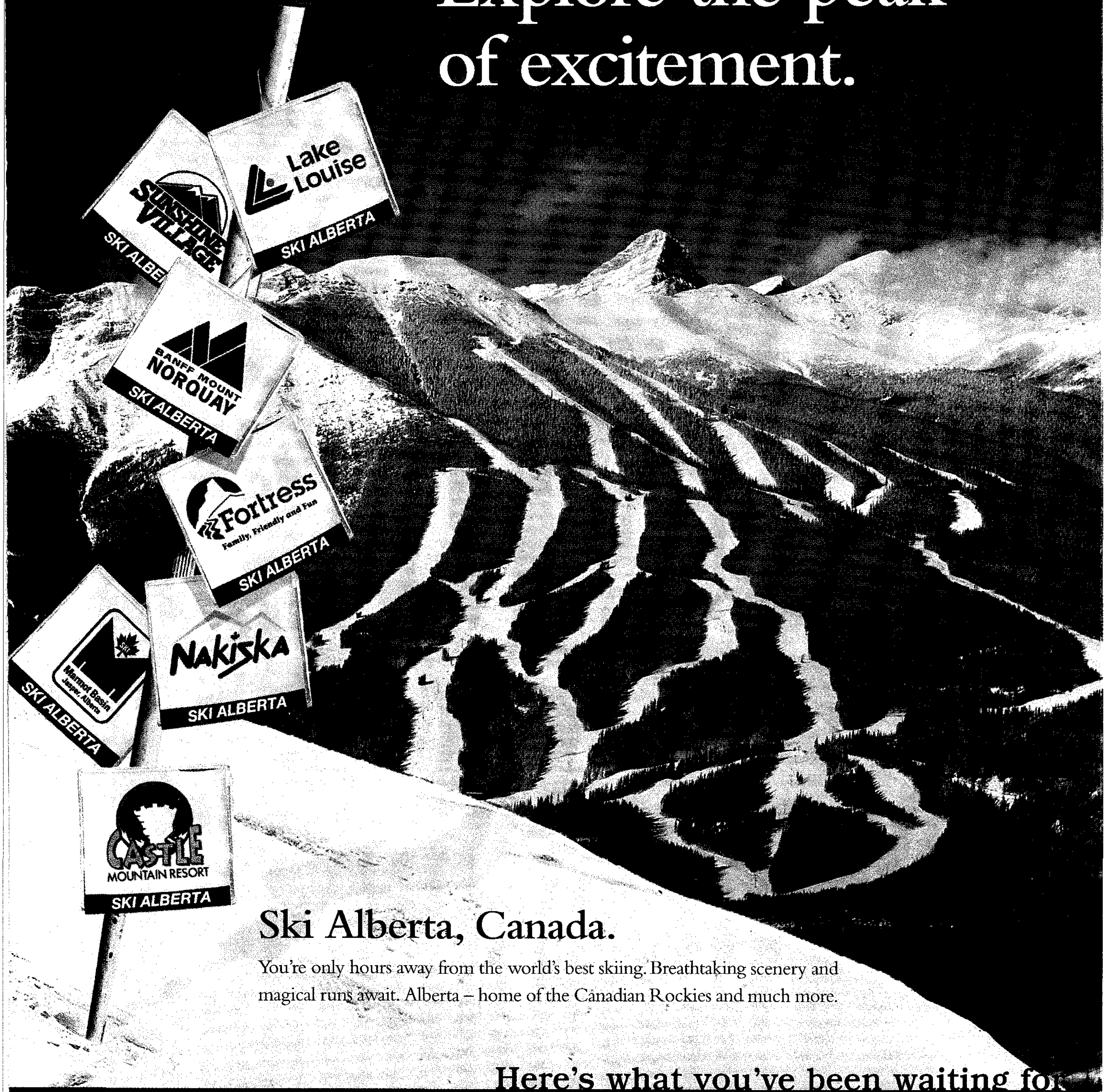
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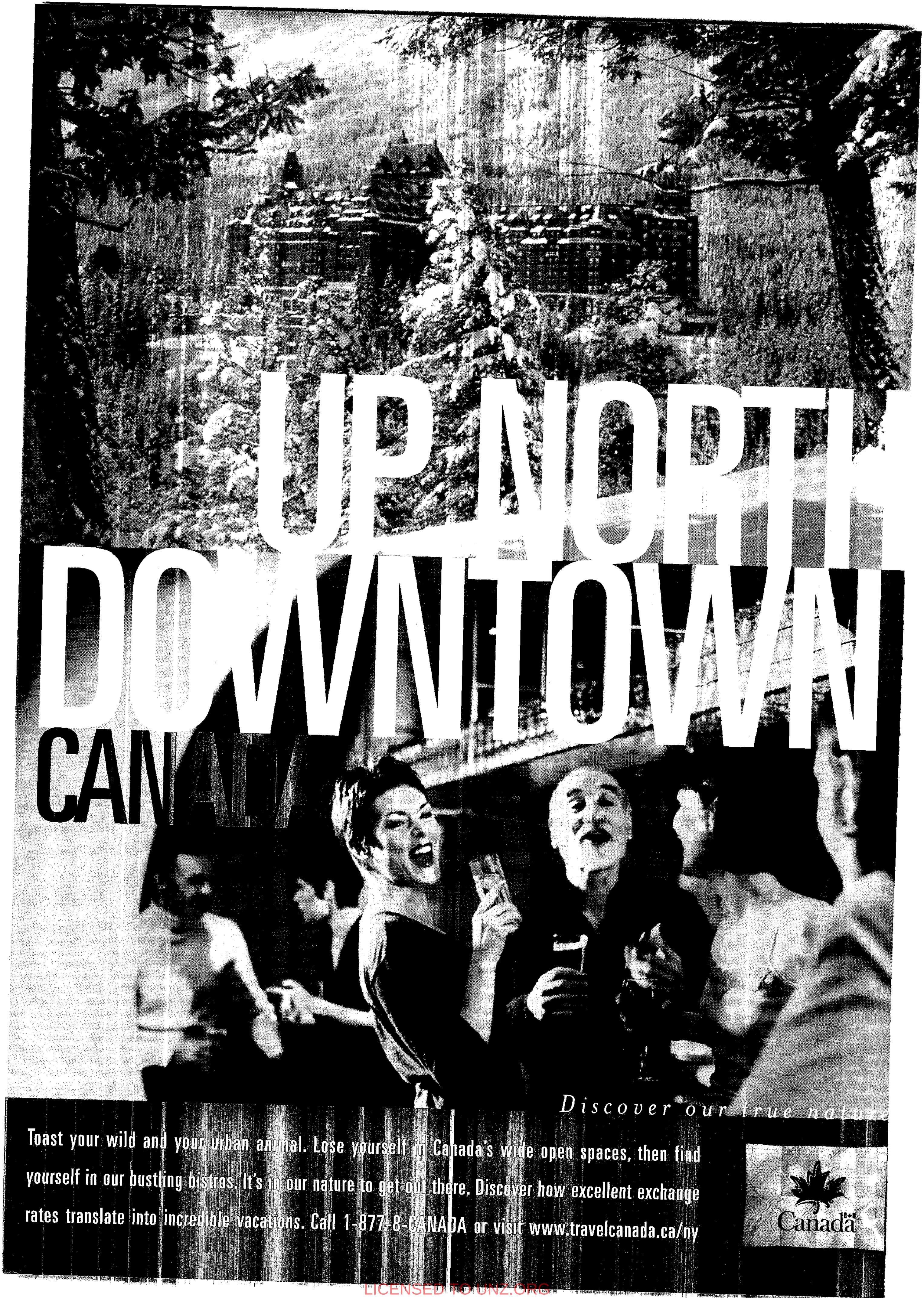
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gant, and intellectually refined piece from 1988—is the finest such work of the last half-century. He brings it to Avery Fisher Hall this week, with Andrew Davis conducting; the program also includes music by Ravel (the "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales") and Strauss. (721-6500. Jan. 10 and Jan. 12 at 8, Jan. 11 at 11 A.M., and Jan. 15 at 7:30.)

RACHMANINOFF REVISITED
In the final concert of Lincoln Center's Rachmaninoff festival, Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra in the Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Garrick Ohlsson) and the Symphonic Dances. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 9 at 8.)

CARNEGIE HALL CHORAL WORKSHOP
This annual workshop for singers, conductors, and music administrators began under the leadership of Robert Shaw; continuing under a series of new conductors, it remains imbued with his passionate idealism. André Previn takes the helm for this year's final concert, conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Brahms's "German Requiem," with the chorus prepared by John Oliver; the vocal soloists are Barbara Bonney and David Wilson-Johnson. (247-7800. Jan. 12 at 8.)

ISRAEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Zubin Mehta, the I.P.O.'s music director for life, leads the ensemble in music by Schubert, Schoenberg (the Chamber Symphony No. 1, Op. 9), and Mahler (the Symphony No. 1 in D Major). (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 15 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY
The violinist Elmar Oliveira is the soloist for the long-overdue New York première of "Lament and Prayer," from 1996, by Aaron Jay Kernis (the winner of the 2002 Grawemeyer Award, often thought of as the Nobel Prize of music), in a program that also includes the first performances of "Three Poems for Chamber Orchestra," by Soong Fu-Yan, and Mendelssohn's "Scottish" Symphony. Gerard Schwarz conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 12 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 5.)

RECITALS

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG
Jan. 9 at 8: "Song of the Midnight Sun," a program of songs by Sibelius, Grieg, Nielsen, and others, featuring the disarming duo of the tenor Paul Groves and his wife, the mezzo-soprano Charlotte Hellekant. (He's American brawn, she's Scandinavian cool.) The festival's co-director, Steven Blier, performs his usual double duty as both pianist and compère. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. For information about tickets, call 646-230-8382.) ♦ Jan. 14 at 8: The festival presents a repeat of its opening concert of the season, "At Harlem's Height" (a program of music of the Harlem Renaissance era), featuring the singers Dana Hanchard, Darius de Haas, and James Martin. (Aaron Davis Concert Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 135th St. 650-7148.)

YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS RECITAL SERIES: YUNJIE CHEN
A New York début recital from a twenty-year-old Chinese pianist, who performs Bach's Partita No. 5 in G Major along with sonatas by Schumann and Beethoven (the Sonata in E Major, Op. 109). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 307-6656. Jan. 9 at 8.)

BARGEMUSIC
Jan. 10-11 at 7:30: The violinist Mark Peskanov and the violist Toby Hoffman are joined by the cellist Zuill Bailey and the pianist Nava Perlman for a concert of music by Mozart, Beethoven (the Trio in B-Flat Major, Op. 11), and Brahms (the Piano Quartet in C Minor, Op. 60). ♦ Jan. 12 at 7:30 and Jan. 13 at 4: Hoffman, Peskanov, and the cellist Raman Ramakrishnan present a program of string trios by Mozart (the grand Divertimento in E-Flat Major) and Boccherini. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

THE KITCHEN: STRING SUMMIT
Three evenings of chamber music for strings which pushes the boundaries of the genre with electronics, improvisation, film music, and the volatile influences of hip-hop and world-beat styles. The performing groups include the string quartets Ethel and Invert, String Army (a seven-piece minimalist rock ensemble of bowed instruments), and the all-female string trio Sojourner. (529 W. 19th St. Jan. 10-12 at 8. For tickets and further information, call 255-5793, ext. 11.)

ENSEMBLE X
Works by Rouse, Sierra, Lutoslawski (the "Partita" for Violin and Piano), and the conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen are the highlights of this concert, given by a superb chamber group based at Cornell University. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 11 at 8.)

MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Jan. 11 at 8: The young Israeli pianist Alon Goldstein performs music by Janáček ("In the Mist"), Debussy, Yedidia, and Brahms (the Sonata No. 3 in F Minor). ♦ Jan. 12 at 8: Lee Luvisi is the guest pianist for a program of Brahms, Beethoven, and Franck (the Piano Quintet), with the Guarneri String Quartet. (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.)

STEPHAN GENZ AND ROGER VIGNOLES
As part of Lincoln Center's "Art of the Song" series, the baritone and the pianist offer a recital of lieder by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Wolf. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Jan. 13 at 2.)

GEORGE LONDON FOUNDATION RECITALS
John Musto is the pianist for a recital by his wife, the soprano Amy Burton, and the baritone Lester Lynch, who perform songs by Musto, Ravel, and Finzi. The program begins with a conversation between the critic and broadcaster George Jellinek and the soprano Elaine Malbin. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 590-0333. Jan. 13 at 4.)

"MUSIC BEFORE 1800" SERIES: CAPRICCIO STRAVAGANTE
The early-music chamber group (directed by the American harpsichordist Skip Sempé) presents a concert of instrumental music by Buxtehude, Reinken, and Schenk, some of which—in the true Baroque spirit—was arranged by the performers themselves. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. Jan. 13 at 4.)

NORTH/SOUTH CONSONANCE
New York composers are the focus of this special chamber-orchestra concert, presented by the long-running series that brings music by North and South American composers together. Max Lifchitz conducts works by Hilary Tann, Astor Piazzolla, Francis Thorne ("Fantasia for Strings," in honor of his eightieth birthday), Elizabeth Bell, and Aaron Jay Kernis. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. Jan. 15 at 8. Free tickets, which are required, will be available at the door one hour before the concert.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

AVAST, YE JANUARY BLUES!
If the darkness of winter leaves you dreaming of the lower latitudes, where the sunshine is never in short supply, cruise over to the ninety-second annual New York National Boat Show, which runs through Jan. 13. More than a thousand luxury yachts, sport-fishing vessels, and other seaworthy craft will be on display. And if the prospect of laying out a wad of cash (or credit) this year seems a tad more unrealistic than it did back before the stock market ebbed, it is still worth going—they're giving away a few boats that are each worth about as much as the down payment on a house. (Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. 624-7000.)

"ZELDA, SCOTT AND ERNEST"
The writers Norris Church Mailer, George Plimpton, and Norman Mailer take the respective title roles in a dramatic reading of the correspondence between the Fitzgeralds and Hemingway. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500. Jan. 10 at 8.)

TALKS
Jan. 9 at 6: The novelist Francisco Goldman interviews the writer Junot Díaz. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0855.) ♦ Jan 10 at 7: The artist Vito Acconci talks about his work. (Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. 570-3676.)

BOOK CURRENTS

The Fringing of America

"You never want to make a house look like an obvious fortress." This helpful observation comes from the "survivalist architect" Joel Skosen, who makes an amusing cameo appearance in Richard G. Mitchell, Jr.,'s **DANCING AT ARMAGEDDON** (Chicago). Mitchell, a sociologist at Oregon State, zeroes in on this growing American subculture of racial separatists, tax protesters, citizen militias, and assorted "enthusiasts for trouble." He encountered apocalypse-obsessed Americans who shell out $700,000 for fortified retreats, subscribe to *Survive* magazine, belong to organizations with names like the Mount Rainier Rangers, and groove to "patriot" singer-songwriter Mark Koernke's "We Must Take America Back."

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

Americans' efforts to shore up against Armageddon, Mitchell argues, aren't anything new: Puritan settlers, after all, strove to establish a Holy Commonwealth in expectation of the Second Coming. The historian Philip Jenkins, in **MYSTICS AND MESSIAHS** (Oxford), explores the rich American tradition of fringe religions, including nineteenth-century utopias, New Age spiritualism, and the Branch Davidians. Puritans also turn up in Robert Alan Goldberg's **ENEMIES WITHIN** (Yale), which cites the Salem witch trials as perhaps the first manifestation of conspiracy theory in America. Noting that more Americans believe that extraterrestrials have visited our planet than that "feminist" is a compliment, Goldberg assembles a history of paranoia which includes such topics as Freemasons, the Kennedy assassination, and black helicopters. These days, Goldberg argues, the idea that nothing is random is stoked by Internet chat rooms and "The X-Files," resulting in a growing population of people who ardently believe, as a familiar bumper sticker puts it, that "Humpty Dumpty Was Pushed."

—*Mark Rozzo*

MOVIES OPENING

BROTHERHOOD OF THE WOLF
A horror action-thriller set in the eighteenth century about a detective (Samuel Le Bihan) investigating the mysterious deaths of peasants in the South of France. The cast includes Vincent Cassel and Monica Bellucci. In French. Opening Jan. 11.

E-DREAMS
A documentary about the rise and fall of Kozmo.com. Opening Jan. 11. (Quad Cinema.)

ESCAPE TO LIFE
Wieland Speck and Andrea Weiss directed this documentary about Erika and Klaus Mann, the two eldest children of Thomas Mann. Opening Jan. 11. (Quad Cinema.)

ORANGE COUNTY
Jake Kasdan's comedy about the desperate measures a high-school senior (Colin Hanks) resorts to when he gets rejected by Stanford. With Jack Black and Harold Ramis. Written by Mike White. Opening Jan. 11.

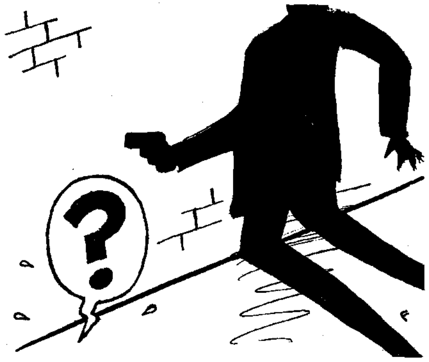
WHAT TIME IS IT THERE?
A drama written and directed by Tsai Ming-Liang which tells the story of a Taipei street vender's infatuation with a young woman living in Paris. In Cantonese, French, and Mandarin. Opening Jan. 11. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

FILM NOTES

ALI
Impersonating Muhammad Ali, Will Smith, muscled up, ears flattened, and with his features reshaped, gets the right Kentucky music in his voice. Smith has also developed the slow-moving meditativeness of a big-bodied man, but he misses the spontaneity of the brazen young Ali, and nothing can match the speed of Ali's punch—the re-creations of the champion's famous fights with Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier, and George Foreman don't come close to the savagery of the real thing. This elaborate bio-pic, directed by Michael Mann, who wrote the script with Eric Roth, is beautifully made, but it lacks a fresh point of view or even successful dramatic shaping. Many of the actors, however, are superb, including Jamie Foxx, Jeffrey Wright, Giancarlo Esposito, and Mykelti Williamson, as a young Don King.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 12/24 & 31/01.) (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

AMÉLIE
A waifish Parisienne discovers her mission in life: to bring unexpected happiness to others, and so to herself. Such is the story of Amélie (Audrey Tautou), and the simplicity of it—not to mention its dangerous surfeit of sweetness—appears to have touched a universal nerve. (In truth, the saga of the movie's success is more telling than anything in the movie itself.) Tautou is clearly a find, although one wonders what Mathieu Kassovitz, who plays the object of her affection, made of his role; it was Kassovitz who, in 1995, yanked French cinema up to date with his baring of ethnic hostilities in "La Haine." The Paris of this new movie lies at the other extreme, although what nags at you most is not the neighborly charm but the itchy, unsettled manner of the director, Jean-Pierre Jeunet. How far should we trust a plea for benevolence when it feels like a box of tricks? In French.—*Anthony Lane* (11/5/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Paris.)

BLACK HAWK DOWN
This account of the ill-fated Special Forces action in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993, which resulted in the death of eighteen Americans, is spectacular in all the good ways. It's exceptionally violent but also truthful to the pain and disorder of battle, and it's very clearly directed by Ridley Scott, so you can see where the different groups of men are fighting in relation to one another. The movie suggests that despite the casualties the episode was not a total failure but rather a demonstration of strength—the men were killed, in part, because they stayed in the city to rescue the survivors from two helicopters that were shot down. With Sam Shepard, Tom Sizemore, and Josh Hartnett, all submerging themselves in the business at hand, which is grim but stirring. Ken Nolan, adapting Mark Bowden's book, achieves the right tone of matter-of-factness, resolution, and defiance.—*D.D.* (12/24 & 31/01) (Lincoln Square and Union Square.)



THE BUSINESS OF STRANGERS
A joyless, time-starved executive (Stockard Channing) spends an evening in the company of the underling (Julia Stiles) she just fired. They make up over too many drinks and then, for good measure, hatch a plan to humiliate a wolfish headhunter (Frederick Weller), thus righting the wrongs inflicted by corporate man. You can sense the setup of Patrick Stettner's first feature creaking beneath the weight of contrivance, and all the shots of the characters coldly caged in glass and steel are an elegant way of making a fairly obvious point. But the two lead actresses breathe, or maybe slap, life into the whole conceit, and Channing offers a fine case study in frustration—a career's worth of rage, let loose for a single night.—*A.L.* (12/17/01) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CODE UNKNOWN
A mosaic of stories, most of them disheartening. There is the occasional moment in Michael Haneke's film when the characters stumble upon pleasure, but it soon passes; as the title suggests, they have enough trouble establishing lines of communication among themselves. Anne (Juliette Binoche) is an actress whose relations with her lover (Thierry Nouvic) flicker from silence to tiff; Jean (Alexandre Hamidi) is a boy in baffled conflict with his father; Amadou (Ona Lu Yenke) is a young black teacher, arrested for trying to stand up for a beggar; and the beggar herself, Maria (Luminita Gheorghiu), is a Romanian immigrant crumpled with shame. Haneke cuts back and forth from one to the next with such skill, and with so little superfluous detail, that the effect is oddly bracing; his is not the portentous alienation of Antonioni, but the hard, topical distillation of ethnic strife—not of a Europe deep in thought, but of a Europe under fire. In French, with many of the characters speaking their native languages.—*A.L.* (12/3/01) (Quad Cinema.)

DON'T LOOK BACK
If you know Bob Dylan primarily as the avuncular, weedy troubadour he has become in recent years, then D. A. Pennebaker's 1967 black-and-white documentary of Dylan's 1965 British tour will come as a shock. Already a folk icon and about to become a rock star, Dylan cuts through mid-sixties England like a knife: he is dismissive of reporters (who are, to be fair, dismissive of him), lordly with his inner circle (which includes then-lover Joan Baez), and downright truculent with competitors (the scene in which he débuts "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue" for a clearly outclassed Donovan verges on assault). Look for brief glimpses of luminaries like Allen Ginsberg and Marianne Faithfull, enjoy the "Subterranean Homesick Blues" cue-card sequence, and suffer through the sometimes interminable backstage patter as you wait for the film's true highlights: the onstage performances of early Dylan classics and the impromptu hotel-room takes on two Hank Williams songs, "Lost Highway" and "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry."—*Ben Greenman* (Film Forum; Jan. 9-10.)

GOSFORD PARK
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea West, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and Union Square.)

IN THE BEDROOM
In Camden, Maine, a twenty-one-year-old college student, Frank (Nick Stahl), is having a headlong summer affair with a local woman, Natalie (Marisa Tomei), who has two little boys. Natalie is separated from her husband (William Mapother), the loutish scion of a prominent local family. When the husband kills his rival, Frank's hypercivilized parents (Tom Wilkinson and Sissy Spacek) begin to consider vengeance as a way of saving themselves from destroying each other. This Sophoclean tale, fleshed out from an intriguing, elliptical short story by Andre Dubus, draws its strength from minute observation of settings, moods, and manners in Camden and from a gradual tightening of the winch. Much of it is very quiet (the first-time director, Todd Field, is an actor and a photographer), but when it explodes, the violence, both verbal and physical, actually means something.—*D.D.* (11/26/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea West, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

KANDAHAR
The latest film by the Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf couldn't be better timed. The story is just a series of gestures: Nafas (Nelofer Pazira), an Afghan woman who left her country as a teen-ager, returns to look for her suicidal sister. On the way to Kandahar (conceived as a state of mind as much as a place), Nafas runs into a variety of helpers disguising themselves to avoid persecution by the Taliban—men in burkas, a boy faking an inability to read the Koran, a benevolent African-American wearing a false beard. The sequences don't have much continuity, but Makhmalbaf turns the desolation of the country into scenes of iconic power. The repeated motif: flimsy new plastic and wooden legs made for the many who have lost their limbs to land mines. In Farsi and English.—*D.D.* (12/10/01) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

KATE & LEOPOLD
A time-travel romantic comedy starring Meg Ryan as a modern-day executive and Hugh Jackman as the nineteenth-century duke who leaps into her life. James Mangold, the director, imparts a casual, easy-listening feel to the proceedings (none of the actors hit their lines too hard), but the movie's plotless machinations are numbingly routine, and both Jackman and Ryan seem a bit mature to be so silly in love. The film does have some great supporting performances by Breckin Meyer as Ryan's brother and Natasha Lyonne as her assistant; they should have been cast as the leads.—*Bruce Diones* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

LANTANA
The metaphorical title refers to a plant bearing exotic flowers (and hidden thorns beneath). The movie, directed by Ray Lawrence, concerns four sets of married couples whose lives are in various states of disarray and a missing person's investigation that will connect them all. Anthony LaPaglia is especially memorable as the guilt-ridden chief detective, but all the veteran actors (including Geoffrey Rush and Barbara Hershey) have engaging roles. There's an Altman-like brio to the ensemble cast which keeps the movie spinning intriguingly to its conclusion.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Union Square.)

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING
It takes about forty-five minutes for the movie to emerge from Sir Ian McKellen's beard (he plays the garrulous wizard Gandalf), but once it does, this enormous hunk of quasi-medieval myth, based on the work of J. R. R. Tolkien, is consistently beautiful and exciting. The New Zealander director Peter Jackson, who wrote the screenplay with Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens, works with enough dramatic tension and pictorial grandeur to sustain us through long periods of complicated exposition and heavy bouts of swordplay. Elijah Wood, of the troubled blue eyes, plays the hobbit Frodo, who has been en-

trusted with the task of destroying a ring that grants supreme power. He is accompanied in this quest by Gandalf, two noble human warriors (Viggo Mortensen and Sean Bean), an intemperate, black-bearded dwarf (John Rhys-Davies), and various scampering hobbits. They are beset by wraiths on horseback and by orcs, misshapen beasts at the command of the vile Sauron. The New Zealand landscapes—jagged mountains, thickety glens, limitless plains—add to the aura of enchantment.—*D.D.* (12/24 & 31/01) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

MC CABE AND MRS. MILLER

A beautiful pipe dream of a movie: Robert Altman's fleeting vision of what frontier life might have been, with Warren Beatty as a cocky small-time gambler and Julie Christie as an ambitious madam in the turn-of-the-century Northwest. Delicate, richly textured, and unusually understated, this modern classic is not like any other film. Altman builds a Western town as one might build a castle in the air. His stock company of actors turn up quietly in the new location, as if they were part of a floating crap game, and he creates an atmosphere of living interrelationships.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Jan. 13-14.)

MILLION DOLLAR LEGS

One of the silliest and funniest pictures ever made: a lunatic 1932 musical satire on the Olympics, with W. C. Fields, Jack Oakie, Andy Clyde, Ben Turpin, and Lyda Roberti singing "It's Terrific." The Mankiewicz brothers (Herman J. and Joseph L.) worked together on this one, and Edward Cline directed.—*P.K.* (Moving Image; Jan. 12.)

MULHOLLAND DRIVE

A woman wanders away from a car wreck and into a strange house. Little old people scurry under the foot of a door, squeaking like mice. Yes, it's a David Lynch project. This one began life as a TV pilot; you can just imagine the aghast faces of the network executives as they saw what they had commissioned. In the event, the elongated weirdness, stretching to two and a half hours, feels discomfortingly at home on the larger screen; if you ever wanted to see an epic horror-soap, this is what it would look like. Many established Lynch motifs are in place, most of them summoned from one corner or another of the nineteen-fifties: the innocent blonde (Naomi Watts), the baffled brunette (Laura Elena Harring), the clueless cop (Robert Forster). Addicts of the director will tie themselves in knots trying to pick the lock of the film; the rest of us can lie back and enjoy the spooking.—*A.L.* (10/15/01) (Cinema Village, Empire 25, and 59th Street East Cinema.)

NO MAN'S LAND

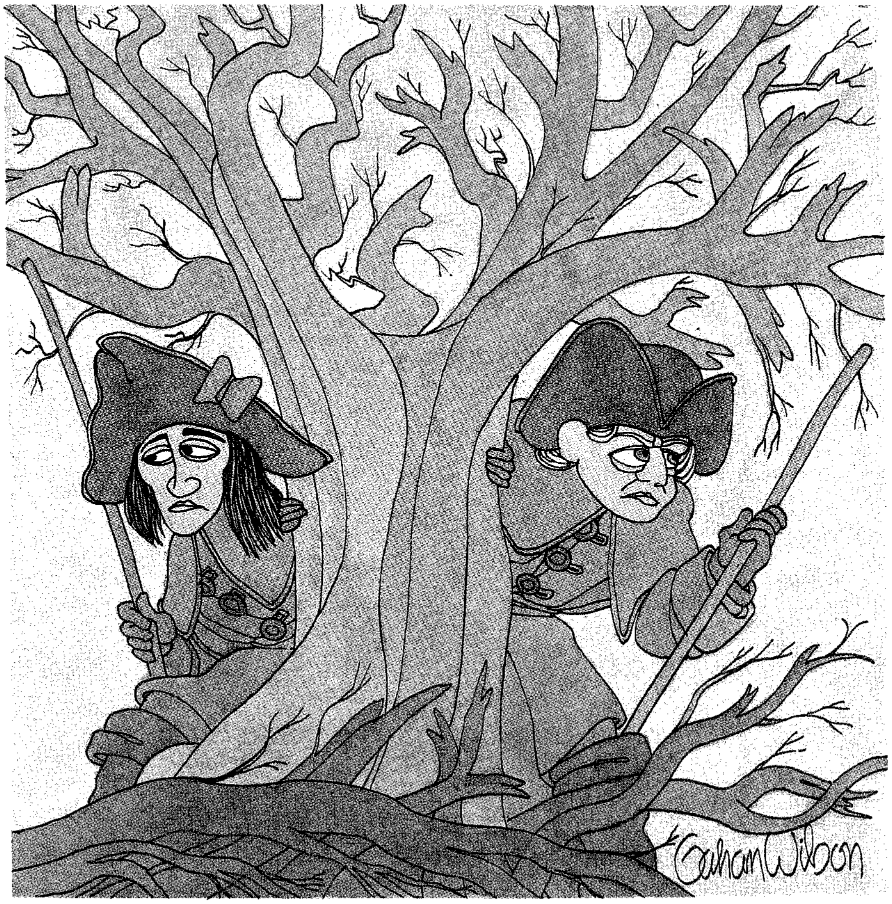
During the Bosnian war, Ciki (Branko Djuric), a Bosnian, and Nino (Rene Bitorajac), a Serb, two very similar men forced to be enemies, get stuck in a trench together between enemy lines. Another soldier is lying nearby on a spring-loaded grenade that will explode, killing everyone, if he moves. The U.N. peacekeepers who arrive on the scene are pompous and ineffective, and the journalists grasping and opportunistic. The writer-director Danis Tanovic has nothing original or even interesting on his mind, but he's made the kind of absurdist war parable which always wins awards and garners good reviews. In Bosnian.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE

Eminently skippable, despite a sadistic game of dodgeball and other funny throwaway gags. The director Joel Gallen and five screenwriters claim responsibility for this raunchy spoof, an overkill trashing of an exhausted genre (the death rattle began in the early nineties, when teen flicks became arch and self-referential). Gallen uses near-exact locations from eighties teen classics, but it's the soundtrack where the appropriation is the sharpest: just a few chords of Simple Minds creates a longing for the Hughes canon in all its emotive glory.—*Michael Agger* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

OCEAN'S ELEVEN

Steven Soderbergh's remake of the famously lazy Vegas heist movie from 1960 bristles with energy. Instead of the ineffably casual Rat Pack, Soderbergh has a cast of hardworking guys: George Clooney in the old Sinatra role as the criminal mastermind, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Don Cheadle, Andy Garcia, and, in colorful support, Elliott Gould and Carl Reiner. Soderbergh constructs the movie in layers with lines of terse dialogue winging on and off the screen and fitting perfectly together. The robbery itself also depends on many interlocking pieces of theatre—moments of imposture and fakery which allow the gang members to breach the inner sanctum of the casinos. Despite all the cleverness and good humor, however, the movie peters out, and, by the end, you may wonder what it's all for. With Julia Roberts in a senseless role as a magnificently dressed art expert who works as a "curator" at the Bellagio.—*D.D.* (12/10/01) (84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)



Opening January 11, "Brotherhood of the Wolf."

GAHAN WILSON

THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS

After the brilliance of "Rushmore," his levelheaded look at the gifts of a misfit, where could Wes Anderson go next? In the event, he has broadened his scope to take in an entire family of misfits: the Tenenbaums, residing in their colorful town house like kooky modern leftovers from the age of Edith Wharton—an age of innocence indeed, despite the ill will that gusts around. The parents (Gene Hackman and Anjelica Huston) raised three overachieving children (Ben Stiller, Luke Wilson, and Gwyneth Paltrow) and then separated. We are here for the aftermath: the daughter's fading marriage to a bearded melancholic (Bill Murray), and other sunderings and patchings-up. The movie is packed tight with strong, if baffled, feelings, and yet we could be watching it through glass; Anderson specializes in the cool, astringent gaze, and for anyone sick of Hollywood heart-melters this could be the antidote. With Owen Wilson, who co-wrote the film, and a meticulous Danny Glover.—*A.L.* (12/17/01) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

Some sort of great film, and an unforgettable endeavor. Technically and imaginatively, what Stanley Kubrick put into it is staggering: five years of his life; his novel and screenplay, with Arthur C. Clarke; his production, his direction, his special effects; his humor and stamina and particular disquiet. This 1968 film is not only hideously funny—like "Dr. Strangelove"—about human speech and response at a point where they have begun to seem computerized, and where more and more people sound like recordings left on while the soul is out. It is also a uniquely poetic piece of sci-fi, made by a man who truly possesses the drives of both science and fiction.—*Penelope Gilliatt* (Astor Plaza.)

VANILLA SKY

This Hollywood remake of the 1997 Spanish movie "Abre los Ojos" can only be called *un desastre*. Tom Cruise plays a magazine-empire heir who lives in the Dakota and works (apparently) in the Condé Nast building—he's a playboy publisher splitting his time between Cameron Diaz and Penélope Cruz (who re-creates her role from the original as a tempestuous free spirit). There is an accident, and Cruise winds up charged with murder and disfigured (he sometimes shouts through a plastic mask). The movie jumps in and out of dreams and nightmares, rushes forward and backward, and the only thing that emerges clearly is that a big star is coming to terms with the anxiety of losing his looks. It's one of those rare movies that manage to be overwrought and completely boring. Cameron Crowe, who wrote and directed it, has to begin all over again and figure out why he wanted to be a movie director.—*D.D.* (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

A BEAUTIFUL MIND (1/7/01)
Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.
BEHIND THE SUN
Sunshine Cinema.
CHARLOTTE GRAY
Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.
IRIS
Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3.
THE MAJESTIC
Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.
THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE (11/5/01)
Empire 25 and Village East Cinemas.
MONSTER'S BALL
Lincoln Plaza, 72nd Street East, and Sunshine Cinema.
THE SHIPPING NEWS
BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

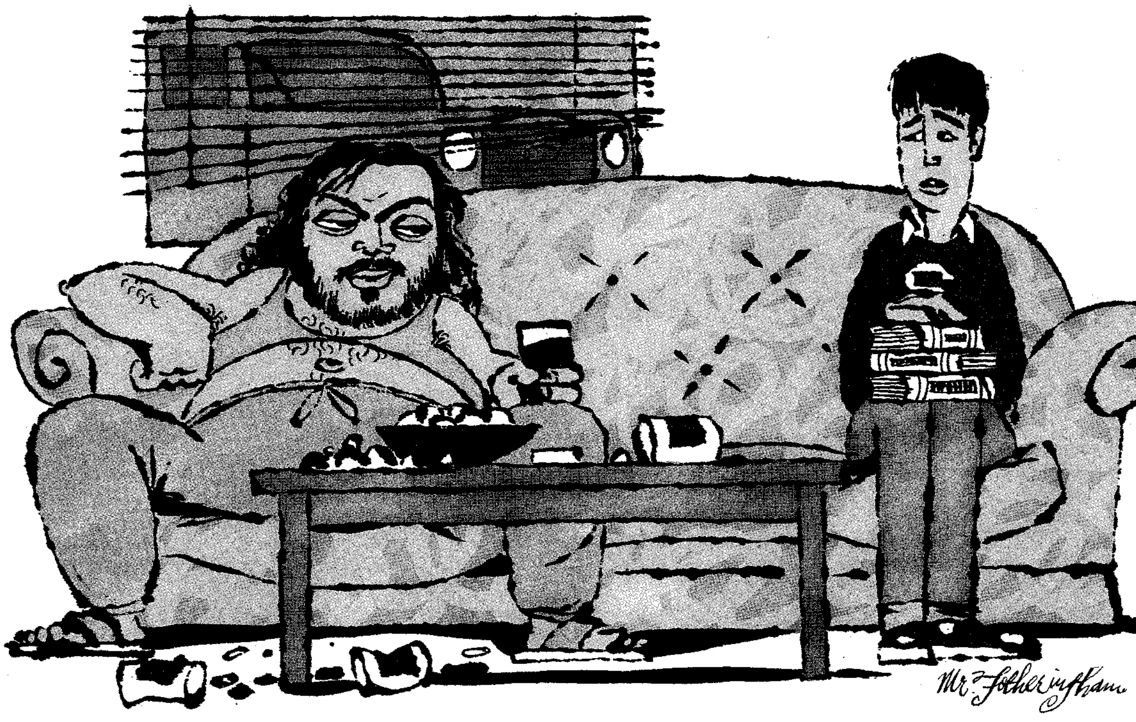
Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

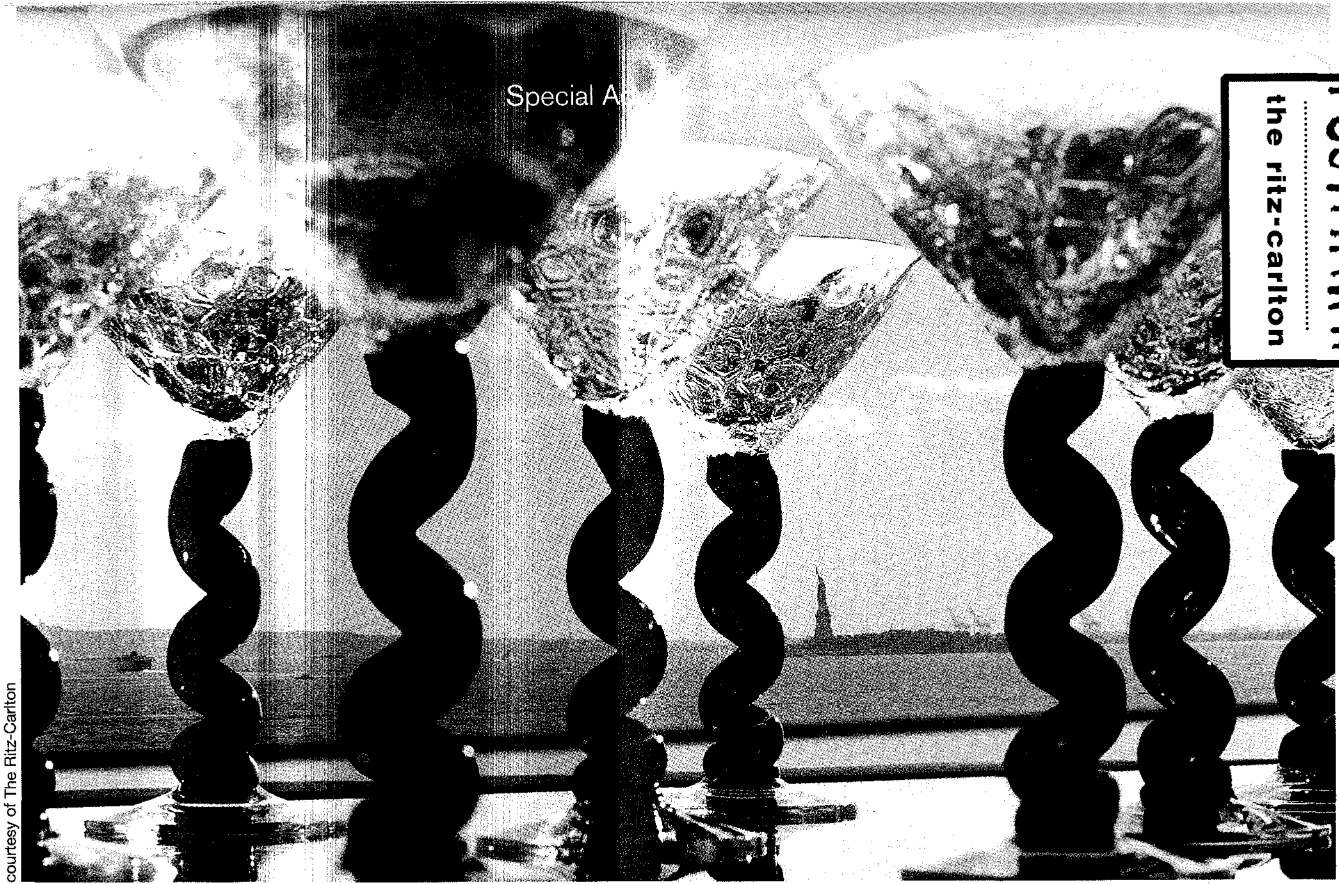
Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Jan. 20: A W. C. Fields retrospective. Jan. 12 at 2: "Million Dollar Legs" (†). ♦ Jan. 12 at 4: "The Old-Fashioned Way" (1934, William Beaudine). ♦ Jan. 13 at 2: "It's a Gift" (1934, Norman McLeod). ♦ Jan. 13 at 4: "The Man on the Flying Trapeze" (1935, Clyde Bruckman). ♦ Repertory nights. Jan. 12-13 at 6:30: "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (1972, Luis Buñuel; in French and Spanish).
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Jan. 10-15: "The American Astronaut" (2001, Cory McAbee).
FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Feb. 7: "Greatest Hits." Jan. 9-10 at 1:10, 4:45, and 8:20: "Don't Look Back" (†). ♦ Jan. 9-10 at 3, 6:35, and 10:10: "Gimme Shelter" (1970, Charlotte Zwerin and the Maysles brothers). ♦ Jan. 11-12 at 1:55 and 7: "A Clockwork Orange" (1971, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ Jan. 11-12 at 4:25 and 9:30: "The Shining" (1980, Kubrick). ♦ Jan. 13-14 at 1:15, 5:35, and 9:50: "McCabe and Mrs. Miller" (†). ♦ Jan. 13-14 at 3:30 and 7:45: "The Long Goodbye" (1973, Robert Altman). ♦ Jan. 15 at 1, 4:35, and 8:10: "Chloe in the Afternoon" (1971, Eric Rohmer; in French). ♦ Jan. 15 at 2:50, 6:25, and 10: "Pauline at the Beach" (1983, Rohmer; in French).
FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Films that portray *la vie d'artiste*. Jan. 15 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Quai des Orfèvres" (1947, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French).
GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (360-4321)—Through Jan. 11: "Brazil on Screen." All films are in Portuguese. Jan. 9 and Jan. 11 at 7: "The Amulet of Ogum" (1974, Nelson Pereira dos Santos).
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Jan. 28: "Six from 'Circ,' " a mix of films from the museum's circulating library. Jan. 10 at 2:30 and Jan. 12 at 5: "Chess Fever" (1925, Vsevolod I. Pudovkin and Nikolai Shpikovsky) and "The End of St. Petersburg" (1927, Pudovkin). ♦ Jan. 10 at 6 and Jan. 12 at 2: "Warning Shadows" (1923, Arthur Robison). ♦ Jan. 11 at 2:30 and Jan. 13 at 1: "Miss Saaremaa" (1989, Mark Soosaar; in Estonian). ♦ Jan. 11 at 6: "1860" (1933, Alessandro Blasetti; in Italian). ♦ Jan. 11 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 2:30: "María Candelaria" (1943, Emilio Fernández; in Spanish). ♦ Jan. 13 at 5 and Jan. 14 at 2:30: "The Scarlet Empress" (1934, Josef von Sternberg). ♦ Special presentation. Jan. 15 at 1: A restored print of Louis Feuillade's "Parisette" (1922).
WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Jan. 10: "Happy Birthday!" Fourteen audience favorites to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the theatre. Jan. 9 at 1:30 and 6:15: "And Life Goes On" (1992, Abbas Kiarostami; in Farsi). ♦ Jan. 9 at 3:30 and 8:15: "Destiny" (1997, Youssef Chahine; in French and Arabic). ♦ Jan. 10 at 1: "Flirtation" (1932, Max Ophüls; in German). ♦ Jan. 10 at 2:50: "Romeo and Juliet" (1965, Paul Czinner). ♦ Jan. 10 at 5:15: "A Life Apart" (1996, Menachem Daum and Oren Rudavsky). ♦ Jan. 11-12: Dance on Camera Festival. ♦ Jan. 13-24: The Eleventh Annual New York Jewish Film Festival.



EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

Opening January 11, Jack Black and Colin Hanks in the comedy "Orange County."



courtesy of The Ritz-Carlton

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE
The view from the terrace of the new Ritz-Carlton hotel's Rise bar of Lady Liberty's torch held high is restorative and reaffirming.

the new comfort zones

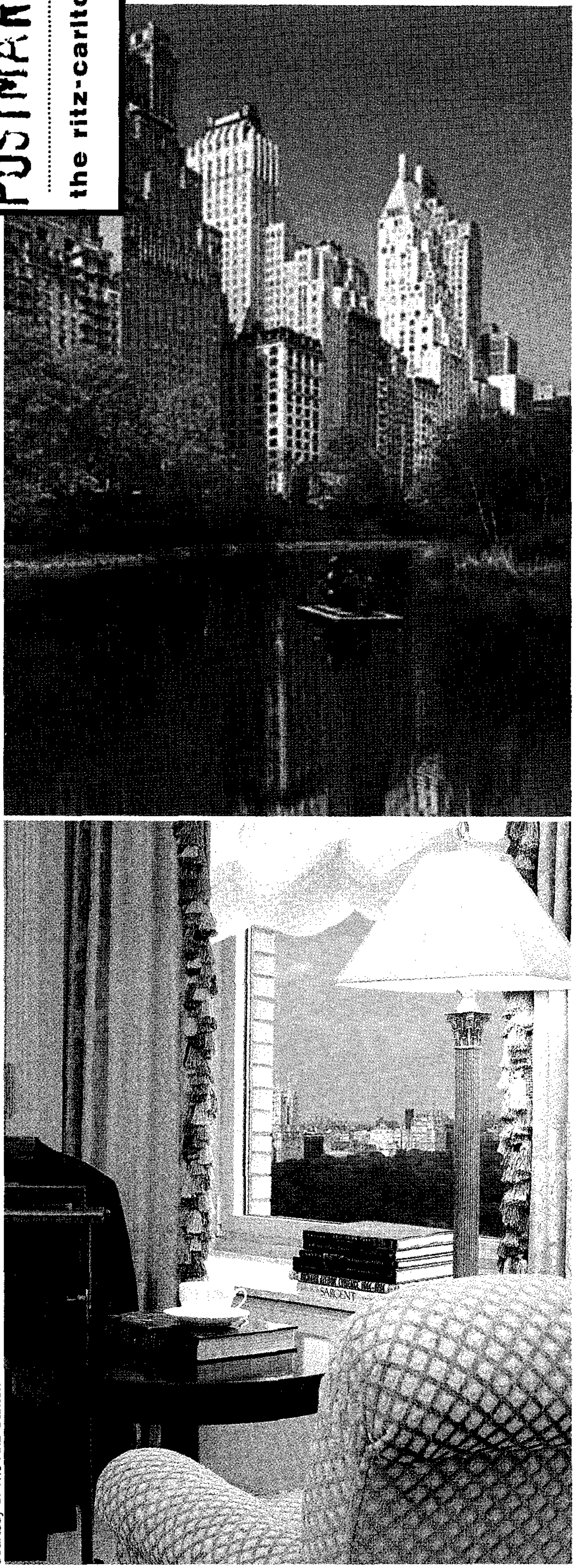
BY NAO HAUSER

This is a tale of two hotels—The Ritz-Carltons opening this spring, one in Battery Park City (January 29th) and the other on Central Park South (March 20th). Each is an expression of confidence in New York City—a sign that the owners, who haven't had a property in Gotham since 1997—see every reason to come back now.

I begin with **The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park** because the message of hope has a special meaning there. The view of the Statue of Liberty from the hotel's Rise bar is so stunning that it's almost as if the city has been gifted with Lady Liberty all over again. Yes, the bar also serves imaginative martinis and delicious hors d'oeuvres, but it's the sight of that torch held high that makes the bar and its terrace a reaffirming destination for everyone.

"It's my favorite part of the hotel," says spokesperson Jennifer Oberstein. "I'm a lifelong New Yorker and for me the Statue of Liberty symbolizes the nation's hope and opportunity." And the brand-new downtown hotel seems filled with light and promise, from the Art Deco curve of its blond-wood lobby to the glamorous ballroom, where a wall of glass draws all eyes to the soothing normalcy of tugboats and barges plying the harbor.

The 298-room hotel gives new meaning to The Ritz-Carlton tradition of "relevant luxury." Certainly luxury is apparent everywhere, from the goose-down pillows and duvets to the marble baths to the windows that actually open. There's round-the-clock food and beverage service, high-speed Internet access in every room, and a sparkling spa. Because the building is bordered by a



courtesy of The Ritz-Carlton

PICTURES OF SERENITY
On Manhattan's Central Park South, The Ritz-Carlton's new "city manor" will provide a sense of haven, as well as proximity to midtown, shopping, and Lincoln Center.

wide swath of park and water, there's the luxury of all-day sunlight reflected off the Hudson, as well as the night's extraordinary galaxy of lights.

And it's relevant to the new spirit of downtown Manhattan to have The Ritz-Carlton welcoming business travellers with a shuttle to Wall Street, a multilingual staff, and even bento box lunches for uninterrupted meetings at the hotel's 2 West restaurant. It's no less relevant to families who seek a convenient base for visiting Ellis Island or the South Street Seaport. (Kids, by the way, are presented with teddy bears from FAO Schwarz at turndown.)

"We're part of a wonderful neighborhood," says Executive Chef Jacques Sorci, "and we want our neighbors to feel they can drop in anytime." So 2 West will offer a heartfelt invitation to those who merely want to stare out at the Statue of Liberty over cocktails or try a luscious dessert such as Chocolate Obsession. But the elegance of the space will also be highlighted with sublime regional entrées like Long Island duck, Pennsylvania rack of lamb, and the day's prix-fixe specials.

If, however, I needed a springtime aerie where New York was at my doorstep, its skyline my private vision, I would opt to check into **The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park**, a 277-room luxury haven on Central Park South. That would place me at the New York crossroads of horse-drawn carriages, Carnegie Hall, Madison Avenue shopping, and Fifth Avenue's Museum Mile—to say nothing of providing me with convenient access to the midtown business meetings that make Manhattan thrive.

A room here facing Central Park feels like the coziest place on earth, and that was the aim, says spokesperson Emily Snyder. "Our goal was to create rooms that can serve as sanctuaries—very quiet, very serene, and with a level of luxury that goes beyond what you'll find anywhere else." She alludes to the hotel's outstanding amenities—deeper marble tubs, Frette three-hundred-count linens, feather pillow tops, the bounty of bathroom shelves, orchids reflected in the mirrors. Included too are dataport phones, high-speed Internet access, and minibars stocked by Dean & DeLuca. But the sense of haven also comes from the vast carpet of treetops, the ducks on the lagoon, and a bygone era of architectural detail that endures in the skyline that rims Central Park.

The former St. Moritz, designed by architect Emery Roth in 1930, is the structure that now houses The Ritz-Carlton, which preserves the legacy of design elegance in its two-story lobby, with its marble foyer, dark-wood paneling, and original art. Returning guests will find that their welcome starts outside at the curb, where they will be met by a personal escort who will whisk them straight to their rooms and remain on call throughout their stay. "That's how we aim to be your country manor in the city, your home in New York," Snyder says.

A spanking new spa will offer the select privacy of a Club lounge, where drinks and food are served all day, and a concierge is on duty to attend only to Club members. The lively, contemporary French brasserie on the first floor is just the right vantage point for watching the passing crowds on Sixth Avenue.

If there's a unifying emblem for both Ritz-Carltons, it's the brass telescopes in the rooms. On Central Park South, they'll face spring's budding trees. Downtown they'll look across the harbor to Lady Liberty. Either way they'll be bringing into focus a future that looks brighter for New York.

(Nao Hauser is a New York freelance writer.)

The Ritz-Carlton returns to New York.

This winter, as New York renews its position as one of the world's greatest cities, two of the world's finest new addresses open their doors. The Ritz-Carlton New York, Battery Park, overlooking New York Harbor and the Statue of Liberty. And the more intimate Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park, in the heart of Manhattan. For reservations or more information, please call The Ritz-Carlton at 1-800-241-3333, or visit www.ritzcarlton.com.

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

HOW ALL THE NEWS FIT

The world turned upside down after September 11th, and, as a small but noticeable side effect, so did the sports section of the *Times*. As of January 1st, the world (though seemingly in better shape than it had been a couple of months earlier, knock on wood) remained severely discombobulated. The sports section of the *Times*, however, is right side up again. Happy New Year.

In its own inky way, the newspaper of record rose to the post-disaster occasion almost as heroically as did the city's uniformed services. Not for the first time, New Yorkers were reminded how lucky they are to have a newspaper run by a public-spirited family that regards the bottom line as a means, not an end. The *Times* went after the big story with plenty of resources, plenty of heart, and not a little ingenuity. The flipped-over sports section was a by-product of a decision to put the paper's coverage of the aftermath of the terrorist attacks into a daily stand-alone section, slugged "A Nation Challenged." (The name may have been a trifle CNN-like, but the content—energetic, well organized, spare-no-expense comprehensive—was pure *Times* at its best.) The press capacity of the *Times* can accommodate four sections with late-night deadlines. Normally, the four are business, sports, local news, and the main national and international news section. (The arts section and the fluff supplements—Dining In / Dining Out, Weekend, and the like—are printed earlier in the day.) So something had to give. The art department, led by Tom Bodkin, the assistant managing editor for design, had the audacious idea of turning sports upside down and slapping it on the back of Metro. Four sections, five front pages: problem solved.

But Bodkin's brainstorm did more than just iron out a production wrinkle. Unintentionally or not, it was also an astute commentary on a long-standing journalistic problem, which is that news about sports is not really news at all—not, at any rate, in the sense that news about politics, economic and social developments, and international affairs is news. Sports, after all, is essentially a subcategory of the for-profit entertainment industry, as the New York Times Company well knows: just before Christmas, it bought itself a big piece of the Boston Red Sox, and not because the Sox are one of the Hub's neediest cases, either. Except for the uncertainty of its outcome, a sports spectacle is news only in the sense that the plot of a movie is news. ("HOBBIT-LED STRIKE FORCE NEARS MOUNT DOOM, WIZARD CLAIMS"?) The fact that one set of highly paid entertainers gets more points than another set of highly paid entertainers on a given day, while of surpassing and perfectly legitimate interest to many people, is not of great moment. To acknowledge this reality takes nothing away from the wholesome, character-building aspects of athletic competition. Nor does it imply disrespect for the craft of sportswriting, which, on account of the repetitive nature of the subject matter, places a premium on literary skill. Nevertheless, having to turn the paper over and upside down to read about sports served as a useful reminder that, however exciting, it's only a game.

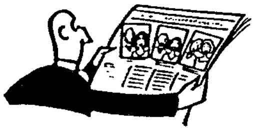
The New York Times

On New Year's Day, the *Times* eased back into its normal configuration. Thus endethed the lesson.

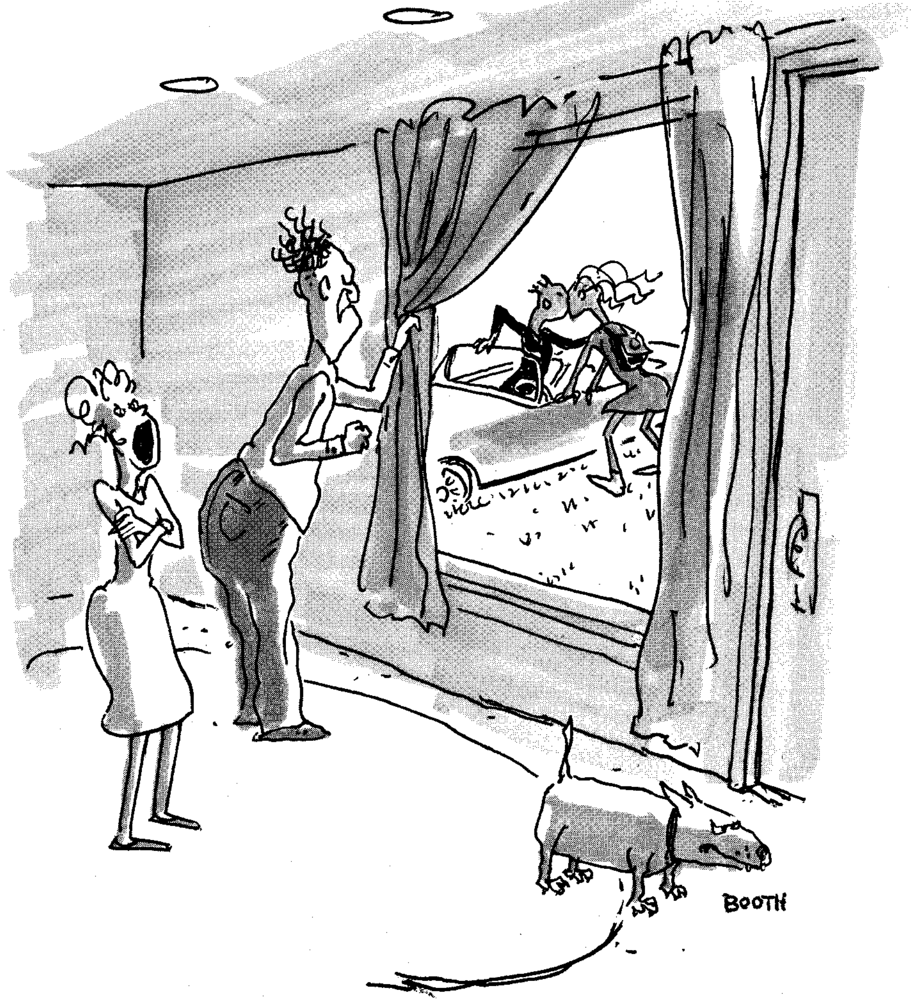
—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

INK
THE GRIEF DESK



Speaking of the *Times*, let the record reflect that, among the countless shrewd decisions that shaped the paper's exemplary post-September 11th performance, what for many readers became the most compelling running story—"Portraits of Grief," the page or two devoted each day to biographical sketches of the dead—was the result of a distinctly seat-of-the-pants, whoa-what-have-we-gotten-ourselves-into lack of calculation on the part of the newspaper's editors. Which is also to say that, for a long while, no one at the *Times* recognized the implications of the task they had embraced. On September 12th, Janny Scott, one of the more dexterous reporters on the paper's Metro staff, was assigned to write about victims, and she confronted this problem: other than a relatively small number of confirmed fatalities, no official list of the dead existed. Two days later, such a list still hadn't materialized. By then, however, family members had begun posting flyers all over the city, and it was possible to call the telephone numbers on the flyers and glean details about the lives of a few hundred among the thousands of individuals who had disappeared. Scott consulted with Jon Landman, the Metro editor, and a core team of reporters (Scott, Glenn Collins, Winnie Hu, Lynda Richardson, and Joyce Wadler) was soon assembled to write mini-profiles. The first installment—twenty vignettes, averaging less than two hundred words each—was published on September 15th, under the heading "Among the Missing." The staff actually produced thirty stories that first day, at a point when it was estimated that the death toll might reach six thousand. Collins remembers sitting at his desk after the paper had gone to press and remarking bleakly to Scott and Hu, "That's great. Only five thousand nine hundred and seventy to go."



"You weren't so hung up on my chastity."

By day two, the rubric had been changed to "Portraits of Grief," and though it stuck, it seemed a misnomer. Wasn't what made these stories so engrossing, individually and collectively, the textured and concise way in which they captured lives before grief set in? The goal of the endeavor was to produce not thumbnail obituaries (of people who, typically, wouldn't otherwise have qualified for a *Times* obit) but sketches that revealed an emblematic, usually endearing anecdote or character trait: Courtney Walcott "was the most organized man in the solar system"; John Katsimatides "was very cool and lived utterly in Technicolor"; "A friend's first impression of Jonathan Uman was that perhaps the man was heavily medicated. Why else would anyone be so happy?"; Catherine Fairfax MacRae "was beautiful and funny and charmingly self-deprecating and talked on the phone to her mother at least three times a day."

"Nobody involved in this had any idea early on that this would turn into some kind of national shrine," Jon Landman said recently. "It was a response to a journalistic problem: how can you write about victims when you don't know who they are or how many, and you can't assemble a comprehensive picture of them? And the answer was: one at a time."

Landman added that he couldn't recall a precise moment when anyone at the *Times* made a corporate decision to keep the project going—to keep searching for the addresses and phone numbers of victims and to keep making agonizing phone calls to their families and friends, until everyone whose survivors were willing to coöperate had been memorialized. "Portraits of Grief" just evolved, paradoxically reducing to human scale the immeasurable dimensions of September 11th while rendering, in a different sense, the incomprehensible totality of what had been lost. As of January 1st, when the *Times* suspended "Portraits" as a daily feature (it will continue to appear sporadically in the coming months), a hundred and ten reporters had contributed and more than eighteen hundred victims had been profiled.

In early October, as the number of people working on the project expanded, an editor named Wendell Jamieson circulated a memo admonishing contributors to avoid certain tropes. By then, evidently, the *Times* had filled its quota of bond traders who loved their wives and kids and were fanatical about golf. The Cantor Fitzgerald guys who always got the best tables at Smith & Wollensky had begun to blur. Whenever possible, Jamieson suggested, one should reach for illuminating details beyond how the deceased was such a devoted student of "The Simpsons" or Bruce Springsteen. And beware when interviewing women who identified themselves as fiancées.

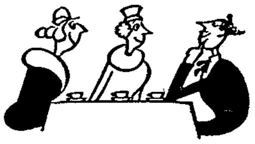
Otherwise, as Jan Hoffman, who began working on "Portraits of Grief" during its second week and eventually wrote almost seventy of them, noted the other day, "The hardball rules of journalism went out the window. You can never presume to say, 'I know how you feel.' Because you don't.

"I did all my reporting over the phone," Hoffman went on. "For most of the people I talked to, I think that was liberating. It's almost like they're on the couch talking to a shrink. They don't have to look at your face, they free-associate, and when they hear a long silence they rush to fill the space. The way in which the reporter is not really a shrink, though, is that you cry. I have never wept so much while working. I would often cry before the person I was speaking with would. It was the crispness of their memories, the way they described these poignant, funny, heroic moments. I can't emphasize enough how humbling this work was. As a reporter, you have to be patient enough to keep probing until you have that click where you can see the person and how they moved on the planet.

"I made a call the other day that I resisted because it was the parents. I usually don't get much from parents. But this was one of the more enthralling interviews I had. It was a fireman, and he was the ninth of their ten children. The parents were exuberantly articulate. They were blunt. They said, 'You know, he wasn't a saint. He was a giant pain in the ass.' But they told me these stories about him in such a way that I couldn't help myself. I fell in love with the guy."

—Mark Singer

HIGH LIFE
DIAMONDS FOR DINNER



Attempts to pump up sales in high-end (a.k.a. expensive) merchandise took a bit of a surreal turn the other night when Yves Piaget, the jeweller-watchmaker, flew in from Tokyo to host a dinner party for thirty friends and clients in a private dining room at Le Bernardin. It was called Une Soirée Exclusive. The atmosphere was dreamlike but charged with purpose, as guests streamed in accompanied by a guitar-and-bass duo playing elegant melodies. "Luxury music, for luxury," a Piaget press aide said.

"Piaget has names for everything," Ellen Akwa, the company's boutique director, said. "We've got five tables tonight, named for the sentiments: Love, Wisdom, Joy, Passion, and Time."

Philippe Bonay, Piaget's vice-president of marketing, said, "Asia is our No. 1 market in the world. I hear we're putting a Hong at the Love table, a Tang and a Yu at Wisdom, and a Wei and two Wongs at Passion."

M. Piaget was seated at the Time table, which, like the other four tables, had a centerpiece made of assorted Piaget watches and jewelry, with price tags attached. The pile on the Time table was worth $1,197,300. "We've got four million dollars' worth of Piaget on the tables," the press aide said. "*Bon appétit!*"

"*Bon appétit*," M. Piaget repeated proudly. He is a short man with white hair, dark bushy eyebrows that recall Henry Luce's, and large, new-looking teeth. He was attired in a blue Brioni suit and an Hermès shirt, tie, and matching pocket square. He fondled his wristwatch. "My baby," he said. "It's my new, upgraded Piaget Polo. So pure." He smiled and put his teeth to the watch.

M. Piaget's table companion, Baroness W. Langer von Langerdorff, a large woman, with foot-high flaming-red hair and brightly rouged cheeks, regarded the centerpiece with a jolly, tolerant manner. She wore huge sapphire-and-diamond earrings and a giant sapphire-and-diamond necklace.

"Piaget?" one of her table companions asked.

"Harry Winston," the Baroness replied.

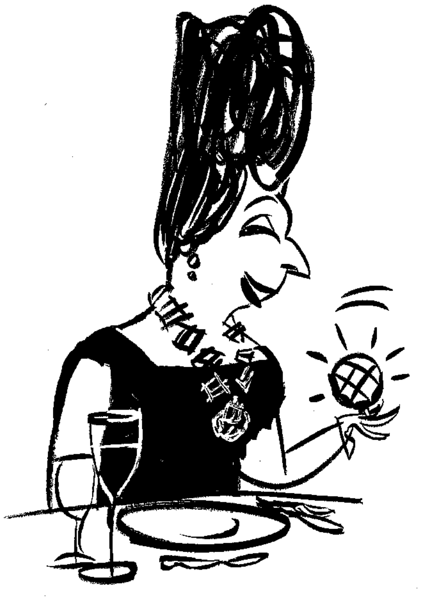
"No watch?"

"I never wear a watch at night," she said. "I don't want to know what time it is at night." The Baroness raised a hand that supported a ring with a diamond the size of a prune.

"Piaget?"

"Harry Winston," she said again, and giggled. "I loved Harry," she said.

To the right of the Baroness, a small, bald, spectacled gentleman, who introduced himself to the Time table as the sculptor Armand Arman, stared at the Baroness's diamond ring, nodded to his wife sitting across the table from him, and said, "We call that a fuck-you stone." The Baroness looked tickled.



Baroness W. Langer von Langerdorff

"My watch is a Franck Muller," Armand Arman said. "I do not like the quartz. I like the mechanic."

"Well, I go to Monte Carlo," the Baroness said, as though to soothe him. "I see Yves at his home every summer in Monte Carlo."

"Monte Carlo magic," Armand Arman said. "If you spend a year in Monte Carlo, you lose two points on your I.Q."

"I don't go for a year. I go for July and August," the Baroness said.

Another Time-table guest, Joan Granlund, a pale, attractive blond woman, held up a hand adorned with a white-gold ring in the shape of a cube, encrusted with diamonds.

“The Sugar!” M. Piaget said, and plucked a similar ring from the centerpiece ($10,700).

“I was on the treadmill at home in Greenwich and bought it while running,” Joan Granlund said. “Then I bought the watch to go with it.” She displayed a diamond-covered white-gold wristwatch ($49,500). “It’s the Diamond-Square Dancer,” she said. “It’s like the old days, when you bought the shoes and then you bought the handbag to go with it. The problem is, there are so many diamonds on the face, you can’t tell what time it is.” That stopped the conversation for a moment. Then M. Piaget came to the rescue.

“Our motto is ‘*Toujours faire mieux que nécessaire*,’ ” he offered.

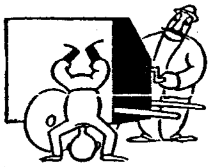
Piaget’s president, Robert J. Filotei, stood up and said that M. Piaget “is like a rock star with all the Chinese communities in the United States.” Guests Hong at the Love table, Tang and Yu at Wisdom, and Wei and the Wongs at Passion laughed and applauded. “And Yves knows the Sultan of Brunei and the Sultan’s sister and the Sultan’s brother,” Filotei said. “In Hollywood yesterday, I found out he knows Quincy Jones.”

M. Piaget was called upon to say a few words over dessert. He smiled and said, “I really feel confused talking about myself. It’s not my name, not my family, it’s our *artisans* that make Piaget contemporary.” He paused, as though he were searching for a conclusion. “I believe in world determination for peace and prosperity,” he said. Everybody applauded.

—Lillian Ross

EARLY RETIREMENT

THE GO-TO CHIMP



Over the past four years, Chippy, a six-year-old chimpanzee who began his show-business career posing for snapshots at the circus, has appeared on “Late Night with Conan O’Brien” (he drove a car), “Saturday Night Live” (alongside Kate Hudson, wearing a Viking outfit), “The Howard Stern Show” (imitated Stern’s sidekick Gary Dell’Abate), “Spin City” (played chess with Michael J. Fox), and MTV’s “Total Request Live” (ranked music videos), as well as in *Ladies’ Home Journal* (dressed as Hugh Hefner), *Seventeen* (posed with young models), and *Brill’s Content* (chose a Presidential candidate by pointing to cards on the floor—he picked Bill Bradley). When producers and editors in Manhattan need a chimp, they call one of the city’s five animal talent agencies—all of whom represent Chippy—and the agency in turn calls Chippy’s owner and trainer, Janet Burger.

Burger, who is seventy-four, lives in a small red brick house in Blackwood, New Jersey, near Philadelphia. She trains Chippy in a barn out back. Now, however, Chippy’s short, happy career is in jeopardy. Last June, Burger married a man named Fred, who lives in Florida. Fred, it seems, wants the freedom to travel, and therefore has insisted that when Burger moves down there she leave Chippy behind. Burger explained, “Fred said, ‘Don’t even bring a Chihuahua. Bring nothing. Especially not the chimp. All the work’s in New York, and I don’t want you driving up and down the coast.’ ” Fred’s reason was this: three years ago, Burger developed narcolepsy, which prohibits her from driving long distances. “If I drive a couple of hours, I go out like a light,” Burger said. “It happened a couple of times on the turnpike.”

So Burger has decided to move to Florida without Chippy. “I cried for a week,” she said. “It hurts to send Chippy to a new home. But I got that doggone narcolepsy.”

On a recent morning, Burger was in the two-acre yard in back of her house, tending her menagerie. She was wearing a blue denim shirt, bluejeans, black sneakers, and a Greek fisherman’s cap over her blond ponytail. The yard was a maze of chain-link fencing and assorted animal sheds and trailers. A miniature pony was grazing in the distance. Just beyond the yard, traffic whizzed by on Route 42.

Inside the barn, Chippy played in his ten-by-twelve-foot pen, next to pens occupied by three other chimps, who are retired performers. A small color television sat on a workbench, separated from the chimps by two Plexiglas partitions. “If there’s violence on, they throw apples, crap, whatever’s in the cage. I had a big TV, but they broke the screen three times,” Burger said. Chippy threw a banana. “He’s showing off now,” she said. Chippy had just finished his regular breakfast of Cream of Wheat (“At night, everybody gets a beer”) and now sat on a white folding chair upholstered with Astro-Turf while Burger dressed him in a plastic diaper and a pair of black shorts. He did a few tricks: pretended to shave, turned cartwheels, impersonated a drunk driver. “He watches the cops pull over drunks on the freeway at night,” Burger said, and then asked Chippy, “What do the cops make the drunks do?” Chippy stood on one foot with his arms outstretched. Then he picked his nose. “Be good!” Burger snapped. “Where do I spank you?” Chippy pointed to his rear end.

Until about twenty years ago, Burger trained elephants and tigers, mainly for the Shrine Circus. She learned to maneuver expertly within the small world of animal show business. For Chippy’s services, Burger, who bought Chippy for thirty-five thousand dollars in 1996, charges a thousand dollars a day for a photo shoot and fifteen hundred for a television appearance.

At a time when there is a shortage of working—or what people in the industry call “handleable”—chimpanzee performers on the East Coast, news of Chippy’s plight has put the industry on edge. Diane Katz, Chippy’s representative at the Dawn Animal Agency, said recently, “He’s the only one in the area who can do what he does.” Burger is looking to sell Chippy, but she’s particular. “Chippy has to go to somebody who understands chimps,” she said. “No fly-by-night who says, ‘Can he play with the kids? Can he go out to the bars with me?’ Chimps can live to be sixty-five. And he’s so good at what he does, it would be a shame to lock him up in a zoo. He should be working.”

—Ryan D’Agostino

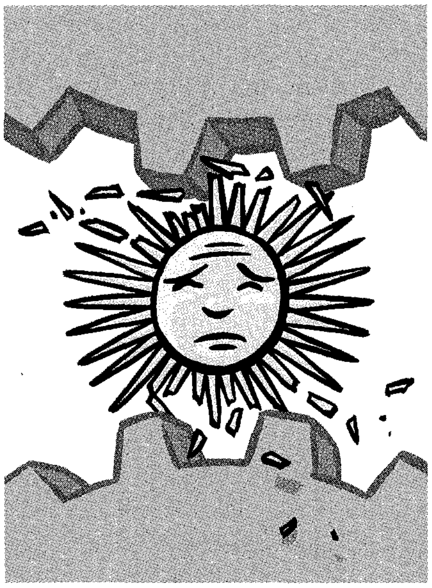
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
THE ARGENTINE MACHINE

In the spring of 1940, a middle-aged Argentine Army officer named Juan Domingo Perón took a Cook's tour of Europe. Although the Second World War had just broken out, Argentina was officially neutral, so Perón travelled freely across the continent. What impressed him most was the spectacle of German organization. For Perón, Nazi Germany was a model of true popular democracy, where the people worked for the nation's good with lockstep efficiency. When Perón orchestrated a coup and became the President of Argentina, in 1946, he believed that his country, like Germany, could become "an enormous machine that functioned with marvellous perfection, where nothing—not even a tiny screw—was missing."

Half a century later, nothing in Argentina seems to function at all. After four years of recession, its economy is on the brink of collapse. It has defaulted on its foreign debt and endured deadly riots. Not surprisingly, in the absence of a clear or simple fix, the turmoil has inspired a longing for the good old days. Argentina's newest President—its fifth in two weeks—is a leader of the Perónist Party, and his supporters chanted "*Viva Perón!*" as he was elected by the Argentine Congress. Perhaps it makes sense that in a time of chaos people should cling to Perón's dream of "a perfectly organized community and a perfectly organized people." But it's this very dream that helped cripple Argentina.

In a successful modern economy, most of what happens—for good and for bad—is beyond the government's control. Alan Greenspan can cut interest rates, but he can't actually make anyone invest. For Perón, with his rage for order, such uncertainty was intolerable. A machine must operate according to fixed principles. So Perón made the government the Argentine economy's chief operator. He nationalized grain elevators, public utilities, and railroads, and decreed that no bank could make a loan without first getting government approval. Under Perón, the government not only controlled prices and wages but interfered in daily life in bizarre ways; at one point, for example, to encourage beef exports Perón declared that for two days each week Argentines must go without meat.

Perón's policies failed. Growth slowed and inflation skyrocketed, because the government kept printing money to pay for its schemes. In 1955, Perón was toppled in another coup. An economy, it turned out, is not a steam press. But Perón's successors failed to recognize this; although they disagreed with many of his dictates, they felt that in general it was necessary to dictate. And so Argentina spent the next thirty-five years embracing just about every faddish theory of economic development. Each time a new leader came to power—the country had eighteen different Presidents between 1955 and 1990, including Perón again—Argentina's economic policy changed. Each new leader declared that the right solution had been found. Isolationism, developmentalism, new currencies, wage-and-price freezes, huge loans from foreign banks: Argentina tried them all. It was the place where bad ideas went to die. Yet its leaders remained in thrall to top-down solutions. As the historian Paul Lewis wrote, "Argentine policymakers seldom consulted with anyone. The usual method was to elevate some prestigious economic 'wizard' to head the Ministry of Economy, where he exercised almost dictatorial powers."



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

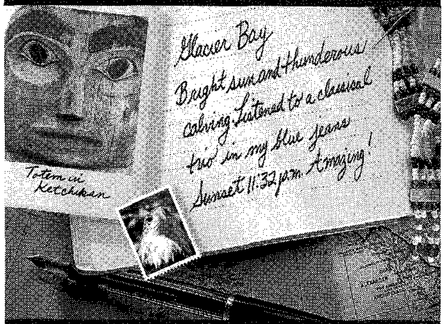
All this wizardry was devastating. In trying to eliminate uncertainty, the state only fostered it. Because companies couldn't be sure what dubious scheme the government might resort to next, they shied away from long-term investments. Workers, fearful that inflation might eat up their earnings, made relentless demands for higher wages. Corruption flourished in the legislature, further eroding people's faith in the economy. In 1938, Argentina was a developed country; its economy was bigger than Italy's or Japan's, four times the size of Brazil's. Today, Argentina is firmly in the ranks of the Third World. No other country has fallen so far.

The economy improved in the nineteen-nineties, when the state scaled back its role, fostered entrepreneurialism, fought corruption, and opened Argentina to the world market. What didn't change, though, was the old faith in magical cures. In the last decade, the problem was inflation, and the cure was the pegging of Argentina's currency to the U.S. dollar. For a while this worked, but, as the economy slowed, the arrangement backfired. It kept interest rates too high and crippled exports. The conditions had changed, yet the wizards of the hour—including the International Monetary Fund and American hard-money economists—insisted that Argentina had to keep the peso-dollar peg. The certainty of debt default and bank failure was apparently preferable to the uncertainty of currency fluctuation. Not until last week, after a month of paralysis, did Argentina finally devalue the peso.

A machine does not change over time. It may need to be lubricated, and worn-out parts may have to be replaced, but in essence it stays the same. This, unfortunately, is not how economies work. A healthy economy changes all the time. New functions are added, old ones are dropped. Parts that were once tremendously valuable become irrelevant. Government policy that fits one set of circumstances might be unsuited to another. As a procession of generalissimos and I.M.F. gurus have discovered, economies are unruly and disobedient. The more you try to tell them what to do, the less likely they are to listen.

—*James Surowiecki*

ALASKA


Glacier Bay
Bright sun and thunderous
calving. Listened to a classical
trio in my blue jeans
Sunset 11:32 p.m. Amazing!
Totem in Ketchikan

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ANNALS OF TERRORISM

THEY'RE ONLY SLEEPING

Why militant Islamicists in Central Asia aren't going to go away.

BY AHMED RASHID

A few miles outside Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, the road heading north into the Garm Valley is enveloped by the majestic Pamir Mountains. It winds across the valley floor through green fields that are punctuated with poverty-stricken villages, empty factories, and blackened chimney stacks. For the first part of the drive, the valley is broad and open, but higher up it narrows and the road clings precariously to the mountainside, with the Surkhob River thundering below. In villages that hang from sheer, rock-faced slopes, Tajiks dressed in colorful robes tend teahouses that have long wooden benches covered with carpets and cushions. Their patrons are weary drivers of donkey and horse caravans and of ancient, exhaust-spewing, Soviet-era trucks that wend slowly down from the Garm district with fruit and vegetables for Dushanbe's markets. Halfway up the valley, where the river broadens into a magnificent vista, a narrow road leads into the Tavildara Valley. The Garm Valley road continues up to the towns of Garm, Tajikabad, Hoit, and Jirgatal before crossing into Kyrgyzstan.

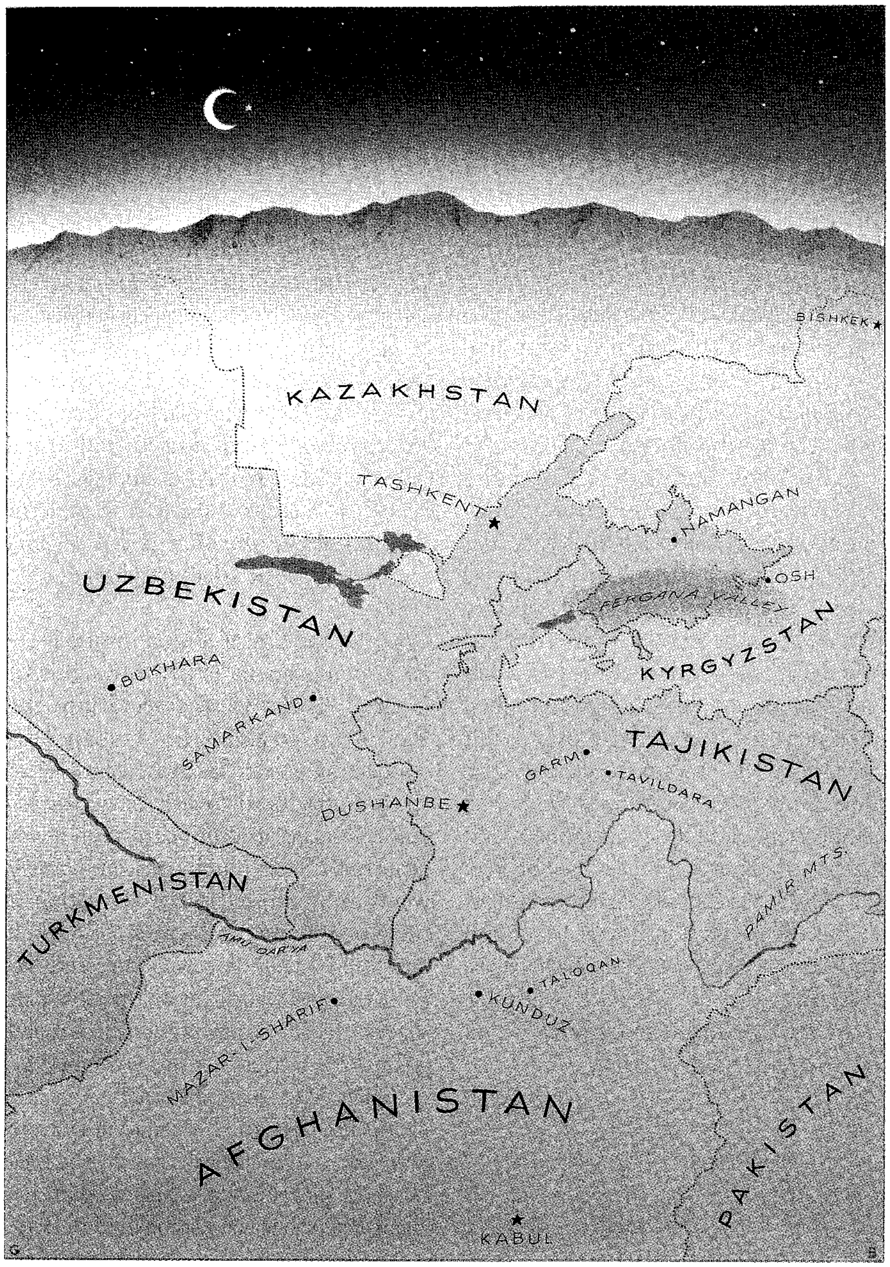
The Tavildara Valley road has been roughly hewn out of rock faces so steep that the mountain peaks aren't visible above it. Even in spring, the temperatures are often below freezing and the high passes blocked by snow and landslides. The Tavildara Valley was one of the strongholds of the Islamicist guerrillas who fought against government troops during the civil war that was waged in Tajikistan from 1992 to 1997. Some of the biggest battles of the war were fought there. This is ideal guerrilla country, where a handful of men can hold off an army.

Halfway down the valley on the left is a long, narrow gorge, at the end of which, in the village of Sangvor, is the fortified camp, logistics base, and permanent garrison of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Half a dozen men could defend the mouth of the gorge, and attempts to bomb the massive jumble of rocks and overhanging cliffs would be futile. I was there last spring, a few months after Juma Namangani, the military leader of the I.M.U., had spent some time in the valley.

"Every day, there were lines of people coming to see him—Kazakhs, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, Arabs, Chechens, Uighurs, Pakistanis, and Afghans—they all wanted to join him and do jihad in Central Asia," a farmer in the village of Tavildara told me. "Every day, there were hundreds of people he had to feed and house and give money to," another said. Namangani had also met with many "sleepers," who live inconspicuously in the villages of the region, going about their daily business and waiting for his call to arms. They were in Sangvor to plan for the I.M.U.'s summer offensive.

The biggest event during Namangani's stay was his marriage to his second wife, a local Tajik woman with two sons whose husband had been killed during the Tajik civil war. Hundreds of people attended the wedding feast. The bride was one of the most renowned beauties in the Pamir. Their marriage not only cemented relations with local Tajik clans but also fulfilled a Muslim duty established at the time of the Prophet Muhammad: a marriage to the widow of a *shaheed*, or martyr in jihad, is doubly blessed.

Juma Namangani is a legendary figure. There are few photographs of him, he doesn't give interviews, and the I.M.U. rarely issues statements to the press. Namangani's stature among Muslims in Central Asia is rather like that of Che Guevara after he disappeared into South America for his last revolutionary adventure. People say that the advance guards of the I.M.U. are beautiful female snipers armed with the latest scopes



Clandestine guerrilla organizations seek a pan-Islamic state across Central Asia.

GUY BILLOUT

and night-vision goggles, and that the guerrillas' knapsacks are filled with dollar bills that they distribute to the farmers who feed them. I.M.U. guerrillas have been blessed by Muslim holy men to make their bodies impervious to wounds or, conversely, to keep their bodies sweet-smelling after death.

The I.M.U. is believed to have been funded by Saudis, Pakistanis, Turks, Iranians, and Osama bin Laden. Namangani was one of the most important "foreign Taliban" commanders in northern Afghanistan during the recent fighting there. He led a pan-Islamic force of Uzbeks, Tajiks, Pakistanis, Chechens, and Uighurs from Xinjiang province in China. They fought on the side of the Taliban in Afghanistan, but their long-range goal was to establish an Islamic state throughout Central Asia.

In mid-November, rumors began circulating that Namangani had been killed by American bombs, but there was no proof that this was so, and the details of the rumors were not consistent—some said that he had been wounded and taken to Kabul, where he died in a Taliban hospital, some that he had been killed in one place or another in the north. Toward the end of the month, after the surrender of the Taliban had been negotiated and the city of Kunduz fell, Namangani's headquarters in Kunduz, a walled compound near the central square, was turned into a Northern Alliance barracks. It had been looted by civilians before the soldiers arrived, but there was still plenty of evidence that it had been used for training recruits in an international Islamic jihad. Manuals in several languages described techniques for operating weapons, rigging booby traps, assembling car bombs.

In late December, the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, and the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, held a joint press conference. Rakhmonov claimed that he had "accurate and reliable information" that Namangani was dead. President Karimov was less clear on the issue, although one would think that he would be the first to welcome such evidence. Namangani has been sentenced to death in absentia for subversive activities, murder, and bombings in Uzbekistan. One of the bombings, which took place in 1999, shortly after the I.M.U. was formed, was apparently intended to kill Karimov. The brutal suppression of Muslims in Uzbekistan led to the formation of the I.M.U., and human-rights organizations say that Karimov's regime has accelerated the harassment in recent years.

Juma Namangani is the nom de guerre of Jumaboi Ahmadjonovich Khodjiyev. He was born in 1968 in Namangan, an Uzbek city in the Fergana Valley—the heart of Central Asia. The people of Central Asia are predominantly Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. Arab invaders brought Islam to the Fergana Valley in the seventh century, and it has been a hub of Islamic culture and politics ever since. To the west lie the ancient Muslim capitals of Bukhara and Samarkand. The two hundred and forty mosques and one hundred and thirteen madrasahs of medieval Bukhara produced scholars who spread their faith throughout Russia, China, South Asia, and the Middle East.

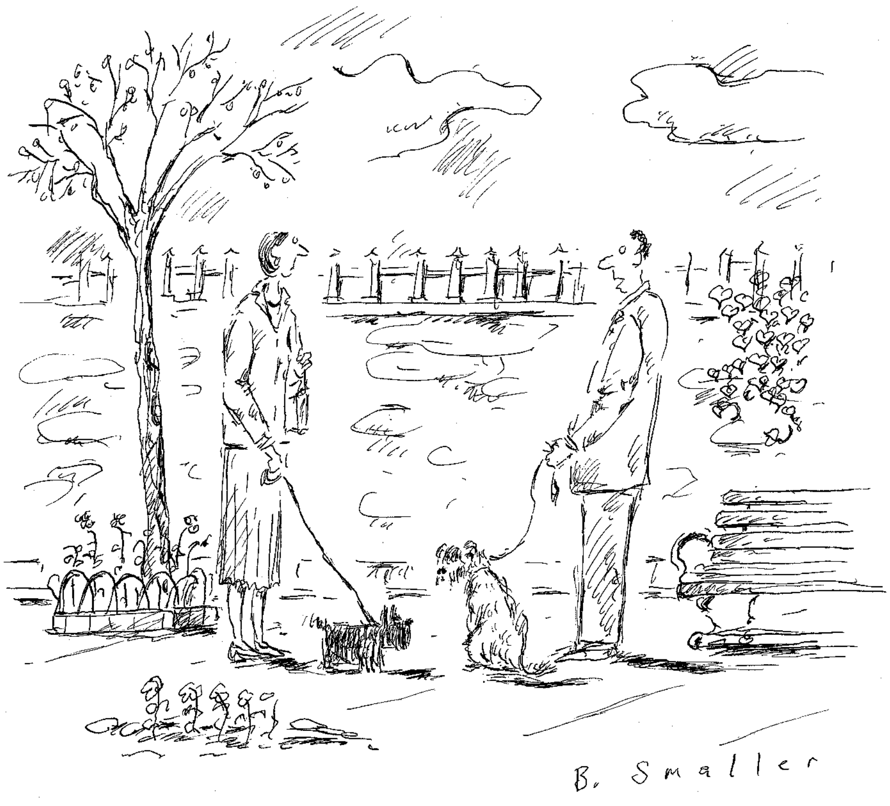
Russia captured much of modern-day Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan in the late nineteenth century, although nomadic tribes resisted Russian rule for several decades, and periodic revolts broke out in the Fergana Valley. To assert control, the Russians began resettling the region with ethnic Russians and Cossacks. They developed vast irrigation projects and turned much of the land over to cotton production. New industries manned by Russian workers were also introduced, and the region was linked with Russia through a railway network that for the first time brought the Russian Empire to the borders of Afghanistan, Persia, China, and British India.

After the Russian Revolution, Central Asians, led by Muslim "Basmachis"—bandits, as the Bolsheviks called them—resisted becoming part of the new Soviet Union. The Basmachis were subdued, more or less, by 1924, and Stalin began redrawing the map of the area into five Soviet republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The new borders were established not along geographic or ethnic lines but in ways that seemed likeliest to suppress dissent, dividing clans, villages, and ethnic groups. The Fergana Valley was split among three republics. The Tajiks were given their own republic, but it did not contain the Tajik cultural and economic centers, Bukhara and Samarkand, which went to Uzbekistan.

Millions of Central Asians died during the forced land-resettlement and collectivization programs and political purges of the late nineteen-twenties and the thirties. Then, for more than sixty years, Central Asia was cut off from contact with the outside world, as the Soviet Union closed its borders with Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and, later, China. Central Asians learned nothing about the ideas that shaped the twentieth century, including developments in Islamic thinking and politics that were taking place just across their borders. Mosques were shut down and converted into workshops, Muslim worship and ceremonies were banned, women were forbidden to wear the veil. People could not even read the Koran.

The government of Uzbekistan opened an officially sanctioned madrasah in Bukhara in 1946 and another in Tashkent, the capital city, ten years later. The Soviets introduced a policy that came to be known to its critics as "official Islam." Mullahs were trained in both Islamic and Soviet studies and then appointed to a registered mosque. But "unofficial" Islam sustained the true faith. Unregistered mosques flourished clandestinely, and itinerant mullahs and fakirs carried out religious rites. The Fergana Valley was home to a large number of unofficial madrasahs, and children from all over Central Asia came there to study.

In the late nineteen-eighties, when perestroika began to take hold in the Soviet Union, there was an explosion of interest in Islam in Central Asia. Thousands of mosques were built, Korans and other Islamic literature were brought in from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and distributed free among the population, and the itinerant mullahs became public prayer leaders on collective farms and in villages. It wasn't really an "explosion," of course, since Islam had never disappeared, not even during the worst repression of the Soviet era. But there were external factors that contributed to the revival of Islam in this period. And these new factors led to a disturbing trend in Central Asia, one that is still dominant—the rise of Islamic militancy.



"I'm not a dog person—I'm just a guy with a dog."

After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, thousands of Central Asians were drafted into the Red Army to fight the Afghan mujahideen. Central Asian Muslims were thus reintroduced to the *umma*, or Islamic world community, through a war against their co-religionists, and many were deeply affected by the dedication of their opponents. Hundreds of Uzbek and Tajik Muslims travelled secretly to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to study in madrasahs or to train as guerrilla fighters against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Many Muslims in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and, later, the Fergana Valley were radicalized in madrasahs run by the Deobandis, members of a Sunni Islam revivalist sect that was established in British India in the nineteenth century. During the late nineteen-eighties, leading Deobandi madrasahs in Pakistan began to reserve places specifically for Central Asian radicals, who arrived without passports or visas and received a free education and a living allowance. The most significant ideological contribution of the Deobandis to Sunni Islam was the revival of the concept of jihad. The Deobandis and the Taliban were especially influential among the generation of militants who later formed the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

The other major Sunni Islam sect that found a foothold in Central Asia was Wahhabism. The strict Wahhabi creed has its roots in an eighteenth-century movement to purify Islam led by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. In the twentieth century, it became the official ideology of Saudi Arabia, and after the oil boom in the nineteen-seventies it was a feature of Saudi foreign policy. Although Wahhabis had first arrived in Central Asia in 1912, when a native of Medina, Sayyed Sharie Muhammad, set up Wahhabi cells in the Fergana Valley, their doctrine was at odds with the moderate Islamic traditions of Central Asia, and it was not particularly popular. But in the nineteen-eighties, as Saudi funds flowed to Wahhabi leaders among the mujahideen in Afghanistan and, later, in Central Asia—many of whom trained in Saudi madrasahs—Wahhabism began to play an influential role.

In Uzbekistan, the revival of Islamic militancy began in the city of Namangan while the Soviet Union was collapsing. Several young men from Namangan had forged close ties to Saudi foundations, and late in 1991, with Saudi money and some five thousand young followers, the men established a Wahhabi mosque and a madrasah. The mayor had refused to give them land for the mosque, and they had attacked the headquarters of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and seized it. The men were led by Tohir Abdukhalilovich Yuldashev, a twenty-four-year-old college dropout and local mullah from the Islamic underground. He was aided by Jumaboi Ahmadjonovich Khodjiyev, who later became Juma Namangani. Jumaboi had been conscripted into the Soviet Army and had seen action in Afghanistan as a paratrooper in the late nineteen-eighties. According to some of his friends, his experiences there had turned him into a born-again Muslim.

Yuldashev began to insist that strict Islamic practices be observed in Namangan. People were required to pray regularly, and women had to wear the chador. Yuldashev also set up neighborhood watch committees to combat crime. He demanded, with some audacity, that President Karimov impose Sharia—Islamic law—on the country, and he invited Karimov to debate the issue in Namangan. President Karimov arrived on December 9, 1991, to talk to the militants, but the meeting soon became a shouting match. Yuldashev made several impossible demands—for example, that Karimov declare Uzbekistan an Islamic state.

Yuldashev's followers were initially members of the Islamic Renaissance Party, or I.R.P., which was formed in the Soviet Union in 1990 and was intended to have an independent branch in each Central Asian country, although in Uzbekistan it has never been able to register as a legal party. When the I.R.P. was slow to demand an Islamic political state, the young militants in Namangan set up the Adolat, or Justice, Party, which called for an Islamic revolution. They had no respect for official Islam, no patience with tradition, and no fear of the political regime, which they considered to be on the verge of disintegration and collapse.

Government ministers in Tashkent told me that in the beginning they had no idea who the militants were or what they wanted—they didn't even know what Wahhabism was. Finally, however, the government cracked down on Adolat. Twenty-seven of its members were arrested in March, 1992. Yuldashev fled to Tajikistan and studied for a short time at a madrasah in Dushanbe, but in May civil war broke out in Tajikistan between the government and opposition groups that included Islamicists, democrats, and nationalists. He left for Afghanistan and helped spread I.R.P. propaganda from there, but he soon began to travel, first to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and later to Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey, making contact with other Islamic parties. He also met with intelligence agencies in these countries. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, which had helped run the Afghan war against the Soviets and later supported the Taliban, gave Yuldashev funds and a sanctuary.

From 1995 to 1998, Yuldashev was based mostly in Peshawar, the center not only of Pakistani and Afghan Islamic activism but also of pan-Islamic jihadi groups. Here he met with "Arab-Afghans," Arabs who had gone to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets and stayed to fight for Osama bin Laden. Pakistan's Jamiat Ulema Islam Party, which later backed the Taliban, raised funds for Yuldashev in Peshawar and enlisted his young Uzbek activists in its madrasahs. Russian and Uzbek officials claim that Yuldashev also received funding from the intelligence agencies of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey and from Islamic charities and organizations in those countries. He travelled to the Caucasus, where he met with Chechen rebel commanders and established himself as the spokesman, grand strategist, and spiritual guide for Islamic revolution in Uzbekistan.

According to a former Tajik political activist with the I.R.P., Juma Namangani also fled Uzbekistan in 1992 and went to Kurgan, in southern Tajikistan, with some thirty Uzbek militants and a few Arabs who were acting as liaisons between Saudi Islamic foundations and Adolat. "Within a few months, Namangani's force had swelled to some two hundred Uzbeks, as more young men fled the crackdown in the Fergana Valley and arrived to join him," the activist said. "Arabs from Afghanistan who were fed up with the sickening civil war there"—the fighting among the mujahideen that led to the rise of the Taliban—"also joined him. As a former Soviet soldier, Namangani knew the tactics of the Soviet Army and special forces, which was extremely useful to the I.R.P. because it was dealing with the Soviet-trained army of Tajikistan. He knew all about bombs and mine warfare and used them effectively in ambushes. He had money from the Saudis and contacts with the Afghans, so he was not alone."

The I.R.P. added Tajik guerrillas to Namangani's group and moved him to the Tavildara Valley, which became his base after 1993 and is still the most important I.M.U. base in Central Asia. Namangani captured and lost the town of Tavildara twice during the Tajik civil war. I.R.P. leaders who knew him at the time say that he commanded loyalty from his troops and was a tough disciplinarian and good speaker who could mobilize people, but that he was also erratic, temperamental, and authoritarian. He often flouted orders from I.R.P. political leaders. None of his former friends and allies credit him with much understanding of Islam. "He is essentially a guerrilla leader, not an Islamic scholar," said Moheyuddin Kabir, who was involved in the I.R.P. negotiations with the Dushanbe government that ended the civil war in June, 1997. "He is a good person but not a deep person or intellectual in any way, and he has been shaped by his own military and political experiences rather than by Islamic ideology, but he hates the Uzbek government—that is what motivates him above all. In a way, he is a leader by default, because no other leader is willing to take such risks to oppose Karimov."

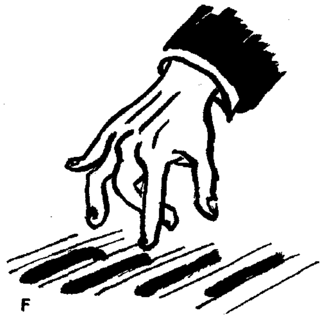
Namangani objected to the ceasefire and the peace settlement in Tajikistan. "When the I.R.P. leaders said stop the jihad, Namangani said no," Moheyuddin Kabir said. "His methods of work and aims were only jihad, and he did not have the political flexibility to understand that sometimes compromise is necessary." Eventually, Namangani was persuaded to come down from the mountains. He dispersed most of his forces but retained a core group of Uzbeks and a few guerrillas at his camp in the Tavildara Valley. He settled in Hoit, a small village near Garm, where he bought a large farm and became the owner of several trucks that carried goods to Dushanbe. Some say that to raise funds to keep his organization going and feed his ever-growing entourage at Hoit, Namangani became heavily involved in the transport of heroin from Afghanistan to Tajikistan and on through Kyrgyzstan to Russia and Europe.

Namangani and Yuldashev met at the farm in Hoit to discuss their future. The Tajik civil war had ended; they had lost their bases in the mountains, their manpower, and some of their weapons caches. Several former I.R.P. military commanders were now ministers or senior officials in the Tajik coalition government in Dushanbe, and the I.R.P. did not want to appear to be breaking the ceasefire by continuing to support a small group of Uzbek dissidents. Back home in Uzbekistan, the situation had worsened. Leading Islamicists had been kidnapped and killed by the security forces. "Namangani was now a businessman and a farmer, but every day there were people coming in from all over Uzbekistan—the Fergana Valley, Tashkent, Samarkand—and telling him about atrocities that Karimov was committing," says a businessman in Garm who used to see Namangani once a week when he lived in Hoit.

In 1992, the Uzbek government had begun to use the term "Wahhabi" for anyone who was perceived to be an adherent of radical Islam or who held anti-government sentiments as part of his Islamic beliefs. Five years later, the government was labelling as Wahhabis even ordinary Muslims who practiced Islam in unofficial mosques or who engaged in private prayer or study. Any Muslim who associated with prayer leaders or taught children how to read the Koran was called a Wahhabi. To many, the term came to mean simply persecuted Muslim faithful. President Karimov launched a particularly harsh crackdown against Muslims after an Uzbek policeman was beheaded in Namangan in December, 1997. That same month, the chairman of a collective farm and his wife were also beheaded and three policemen were killed in a shoot-out. Nobody claimed responsibility for the killings, but the government arrested more than a thousand people in the Fergana Valley. Police questioned any man with a beard. Human Rights Watch reported "a government policy of intolerance" toward Muslim believers: arbitrary detentions and arrests, beatings and threats, fabrication of evidence, and torture.

Uzbek refugees arriving at the farm in Hoit put pressure on Namangani and Yuldashev to respond. They agreed to do something, but first they needed a new sanctuary. Tajikistan was no longer a reliable base for their operations. It made more sense to use Afghanistan. Yuldashev had been introduced to the Taliban in Kabul, and they had every reason to offer him refuge: President Karimov was belligerently anti-Taliban, and Uzbekistan was backing the anti-Taliban opposition in Afghanistan. Yuldashev had also met with Osama bin Laden, who was living with the Taliban leaders in Kandahar.

In 1998, Yuldashev settled in Kabul, where the Taliban gave him a house in the diplomatic quarter of Wazir Akbar Khan. He had another house in Kandahar. That summer, he and Namangani formed the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Several months later, on February 16, 1999, six car bombs exploded in the center of Tashkent, in an apparent attempt to assassinate Karimov. The most powerful bomb, set off by two men who jumped from their car and opened fire on police guards before they escaped, exploded at the entrance to the building that housed the office of the cabinet of ministers—one of the most heavily guarded locations in Uzbekistan. Karimov had left his country residence and was on his way to attend a cabinet meeting when his driver was alerted by police that bombs had gone off. Although no officials were harmed, sixteen people were killed and more than a hundred were injured.



Within a few days, at least two thousand people were brought in for questioning. A common theory among Uzbeks is that the bombing was carried out by Karimov's rivals within the regime, but Karimov blamed the Islamicists, claiming that some of the bombers had fled to Pakistan, others to Turkey, and still others to Kazakhstan. Yuldashev was alleged to have organized the assassination attempt from the United Arab Emirates. Throughout the summer, officials in Uzbekistan complained that the Tajiks were harboring Namangani. Although he was clearly there, "harboring" may not have been the best way of describing the situation; Tajikistan was not in a position to take on the I.M.U. Nevertheless, the Tajik President, Emomali Rakhmonov, did exert pressure on I.R.P. leaders in the coalition government to get rid of Namangani or, at the least, to send him to Afghanistan.

When Namangani took up arms in the early summer of 1999, he pledged to the local population and the Dushanbe government that he would not interfere in Tajikistan's politics or attempt to revive the Islamicist movement in Tajikistan; he asked only that he be given transit rights so that he could cross the Tajik-Kyrgyz border into the Fergana Valley. There were few military checkpoints on the roads then, and he was able to use trucks and taxis to transport supplies up the Garm Valley road to Jirgatal, where the goods were loaded onto donkey and horse caravans and sent on treks of four or five days across the mountains and into the foothills at the southern edge of the Fergana Valley. Uzbekistan has mined its borders with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in an attempt to stop the I.M.U., and local villagers who cross the border illegally are arrested. But the border controls have led to a thriving business in smuggling, and many of the smugglers gave the I.M.U. logistical support.

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In August, 1999, fearing that Karimov would force the Tajikistan government to attempt to disband his fighters, Namangani took the initiative. In a small village west of Osh, in Kyrgyzstan, a twenty-one-man I.M.U. unit kidnapped a district officer and three Kyrgyz officials, demanding money, supplies, and a helicopter to fly them to Afghanistan in exchange for the hostages. The panic-stricken Kyrgyz government, which was unprepared for such an incursion, quickly succumbed. The hostages were freed after the guerrillas were given safe passage back to Tajikistan. There were persistent reports that the Kyrgyz had also paid them fifty thousand dollars. President Karimov reacted furiously, accusing Kyrgyzstan of collusion with the I.M.U. He sent Uzbek bombers to attack the Jirgatal and Garm districts. Predictably, the destruction sparked protests from Tajikistan and heightened tensions—exactly the kind of interstate conflict that Namangani wanted.

More I.M.U. groups moved into the area around Batken, the most undeveloped district in Kyrgyzstan. Its rich soil has turned to salt because of over-irrigation during the Soviet period and the closing of canals at the Uzbekistan border. Rusting factories have been abandoned, electricity is available for only four hours a day, and there are no jobs. The milk plant, the oil mill, and a wine-making factory have been shut since 1991, and the government has made no attempt to revive them. Guerrillas entered three villages and captured a major general in the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry and four Japanese geologists who worked for a mining agency. As Kyrgyz troops mobilized and Russian military units were sent to try to find the Japanese hostages, four thousand Kyrgyz herdsmen and their families fled the surrounding mountains, creating an enormous humanitarian crisis.

By late August, the I.M.U. groups held some twenty hostages, whom they gradually freed as they fought running battles with the Kyrgyz Army. But they hung on to the Japanese geologists. Several Japanese secret-service agents and diplomats arrived, opening negotiations with neighboring states in an attempt to find a link to the I.M.U. Uzbek planes attacked I.M.U.-held villages around Batken and Osh, killing four Kyrgyz farmers and destroying dozens of houses. The Kyrgyz Army launched an offensive, seeking to cut the guerrilla groups off from one another and drive them back into Tajikistan. The Japanese hostages were finally released in late October. Although both the Japanese and Kyrgyz leaders insisted that no ransom had been paid, Western diplomats reported that Japan had secretly given between two and six million dollars to Kyrgyz officials, who delivered it to the I.M.U.

With winter fast approaching, when the passes into Tajikistan would once more be closed by snow, the I.M.U. retreated to Tavildara. Tajik government ministers from the I.R.P. were already there; they had come to persuade Namangani to go to Afghanistan. In the first week of November, some three hundred I.M.U. militants, along with their wives and children, were escorted across the Afghan border by Russian soldiers. In Afghanistan, they were received by a jubilant Yuldashev and the Taliban. The I.M.U. guerrillas were housed in Mazar-i-Sharif, and their families were moved into a former U.N. refugee camp. The Taliban allowed the I.M.U. to set up a training camp, open political offices in Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazar, and take in fresh recruits who were trickling down from the Fergana Valley. Yuldashev had struck a deal with the Taliban in which the I.M.U. would be free to carry out its military operations against Uzbekistan. In return, the I.M.U. would fight for the Taliban against the forces of Ahmed Shah Massoud, the Defense Minister of the Northern Alliance. For the first time since the Basmachi revolt, the spectre of a military jihad rose across Central Asia.

That winter, Namangani and Yuldashev travelled frequently to Kandahar, where they met with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban leader Mullah Omar to plan strategy and negotiate for arms, ammunition, and money. According to Russian intelligence officials, bin Laden paid for three MI-8 transport helicopters. Namangani reportedly received more than twenty million dollars from bin Laden in the spring of 2000, and his backers in Saudi Arabia and other countries provided another fifteen million for high-tech equipment like sniper rifles, communications devices, and night-vision goggles. Bin Laden's growing links with the I.M.U offered him a new base of operations in Central Asia—an area where previously he had had few contacts.

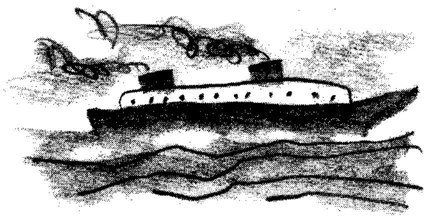
Much of the I.M.U.'s financing came from the lucrative opium trade through Afghanistan. Ralf Mutschke, the assistant director of Interpol's Criminal Intelligence Directorate, estimated that sixty per cent of Afghan opium exports were moving through Central Asia and that the "I.M.U. may be responsible for seventy per cent of the total amount of heroin and opium transiting through the area." Wherever the I.M.U. appeared, it was clear that its fighters were never short of funds, and they were careful to pay for all the supplies they took from local villagers. Namangani reportedly paid his guerrillas monthly salaries of between a hundred and five hundred dollars—in U.S. dollar bills. This rumor alone was enough to insure that more recruits would join him from the poverty-stricken Fergana Valley.

In July, 2000, Namangani went back to the Tavildara Valley from Afghanistan with a force of several hundred well-armed men, which he began to move into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for a new offensive. He spent several months quietly infiltrating fighters into the mountains of the Uzbek province of Surkhandarya, where they built a heavily fortified camp, manned by some hundred and seventy I.M.U. guerrillas. The Uzbek Army had no idea they were there until fighting broke out. Foreign diplomats in Tashkent told me that Uzbek special forces who had been trained by the Russians and had just returned from commando training in the United States were outgunned and outclassed. It took a month of heavy fighting, including aerial bombardment, before the Army was able to storm the camp.

During the operation in Surkhandarya province, Uzbek troops forcibly evacuated more than two thousand people from five villages high up in the mountains. These were ethnic-Tajik herdsmen who for generations had lived far from any town or government control. Their plight became a sorry example of Uzbekistan's ability to alienate and traumatize its own people while trying to deal with the I.M.U. The previous fall, the herdsmen had attempted to alert the Uzbek Army to the presence of armed guerrillas in the mountains, but they were ignored. Once fighting broke out, the Uzbek authorities accused the herdsmen of providing food to the I.M.U. "They're very simple and hospitable people," a resident of the town of Sariasio in Surkhandarya told a reporter. "Anyone who comes their way will be invited in, even if he's got a submachine gun hanging around his neck. What's more, in the mountains there's no work, and if they had the chance to sell something, then, of course, they wouldn't refuse."

The Army destroyed the herdsmen's villages and placed the men in a military camp for two months, where they were given almost nothing to eat. They were relocated to an even more desolate area, where some died of cold and hunger. When, in their naïveté, they asked to see President Karimov to describe their plight to him, they were beaten. One man, Hazratkul Kodirov, gave an interview to the BBC describing the miserable conditions. He was tortured and killed by the Uzbek Army. When the family received his body, his brother reported that his head had been crushed, his arms and legs broken, and at least fifty wounds made on his body by a screwdriver. Seventy-three villagers were eventually charged with subversion, terrorism, and abetting the I.M.U.

In August, ten mountain climbers, four of whom were Americans, were kidnapped by guerrillas in Kyrgyzstan. The guerrillas and their hostages were soon surrounded by Kyrgyz special-forces troops. After several days of pursuit, the Kyrgyz killed six guerrillas, captured two others, and rescued the climbers, whose story later became a magazine article and a book. The fact that Americans were involved in the incident had a lot to do with the decision made shortly thereafter by the U.S. government to declare the I.M.U. a terrorist group.



At the end of October, Namangani withdrew his forces and moved back to Afghanistan. The I.M.U., now based in Mazar-i-Sharif and Kunduz, was fast becoming a pan-Islamic force. It numbered two thousand fighters from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, the Caucasus, and the Chinese Muslim province of Xinjiang. They were becoming experienced in the integrated use of armor, artillery, and airpower, and had been involved in field operations with global jihadi networks like Al Qaeda.

That fall, in Tashkent, Namangani and Yuldashev were sentenced to death in absentia. In December, Namangani crossed into Tajikistan from Afghanistan with a multinational force of about three hundred militants. Karimov again accused the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments of harboring the I.M.U., and cut off their gas supplies in retaliation. He stepped up the mining of Uzbekistan's borders, further disrupting families, villages, and trade. Karimov then started expelling refugees from Tajikistan. These were ethnic Uzbeks who had fled Tajikistan during the civil war. There were thousands of such people.

The government of Tajikistan resented Karimov, particularly since he had given sanctuary to several Tajik dissidents. Nevertheless, under enormous pressure from Uzbekistan and the international community, Tajik ministers went to Tavildara to try and persuade Namangani to return to Afghanistan. He agreed to leave—again under the supervision of Russian border guards. In January, 2001, Russian transport helicopters airlifted Namangani and three hundred men from Tavildara to the Afghan border. Conspiracy theories in the streets, in government ministries, and in foreign embassies in Dushanbe had it that the Russians were playing a double game. While Russia officially opposed the I.M.U., it turned a blind eye to Namangani's forays from Afghanistan because Moscow was trying to pressure Karimov into accepting Russian troops and greater Russian influence in Uzbekistan. The Russians never explained why Namangani was not simply arrested.

As the summer of 2001 approached, governments across the region prepared for another I.M.U. assault, which was not long in coming. In late July, two Army posts on the Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan border were attacked, and a few days later guerrillas attacked a Kyrgyz television transmitter. The guerrillas had not come from Tajikistan. They were I.M.U. sleepers in Kyrgyz villages. Namangani appeared to have permanent guerrilla forces in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and a new, independent command structure that could operate without his presence.

Uzbekistan celebrated the tenth anniversary of its independence from the Soviet Union on September 1st, and as part of an anniversary amnesty President Karimov freed some twenty-five thousand of the sixty-four thousand prisoners in Uzbek jails. The government reduced the jail terms for another twenty-five thousand prisoners, but seven thousand Muslims were not covered by the amnesty.

Pressure from human-rights groups and Western governments had forced Karimov to impose the amnesty, but on September 11th his situation vis-à-vis the international community changed dramatically. Within days of the attacks on the World Trade Center, Karimov was being wooed by Washington, as the United States sought to establish military bases and landing rights in Uzbekistan in preparation for an assault on the Taliban. On September 20th, in an address to Congress, President Bush suggested that the I.M.U. was linked to Osama bin Laden and could be a target for United States counterterrorism efforts.

Central Asian leaders feared that giving the United States overt help in fighting the Taliban would provide a propaganda coup for the I.M.U., allowing it to depict the regimes as lackeys of the Americans. Guerrilla attacks could be justified as retribution for the selling out of national interests and also for allowing an infidel force to be based on Central Asian soil with the sole purpose of conducting a war against Muslims. Shortly after Uzbekistan opened its territory to American forces, the World Bank sent a delegation to Tashkent to discuss new loans. The I.M.U. reacted predictably. In a radio interview on October 9th, Yuldashev said that the I.M.U. was "willing to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Taliban" against their enemies, including Uzbekistan. Karimov's willingness to coöperate with the United States was described as support for the infidels against the believers.

Shortly after the Taliban surrendered in northern Afghanistan, Yuldashev was reported to have been in the fort at Mazar-i-Sharif where hundreds of Taliban prisoners were killed during an uprising. At the press conference in late December, President Karimov said that Yuldashev was most likely now in Pakistan. Namangani may indeed have been killed during the American bombing campaign. Certainly, hundreds of their troops were lost.

Support from Osama bin Laden has ended, and the I.M.U.'s sources of financing from the Uzbek diaspora and Arabs in the Gulf states have been dramatically cut back. But if Namangani and Yuldashev are still alive, they will soon reorganize and begin carrying out acts of terrorism against the Karimov regime and against American targets in the cities of Uzbekistan. In any case, the I.M.U. fighters who have escaped from Afghanistan will regroup, probably among the sleepers who remain in Central Asia, with their secret organizational structure intact. Funds are still available from the heroin trade. The poppy-planting season began in November in Afghanistan, where the new government is unlikely to be stable for years to come, if ever.

Uzbekistan and other Central Asian regimes have made no gesture toward reforming their grotesque record of human-rights abuses. Muslim believers remain in Uzbek jails, elections are a farce, there is not even minimal freedom of the press or of assembly, and torture is commonplace. In this landscape of repression, which appears to many to be sanctioned and rewarded by the United States, the I.M.U. and other radical Islamic parties seeking to end the status quo cannot help but find supporters. ♦

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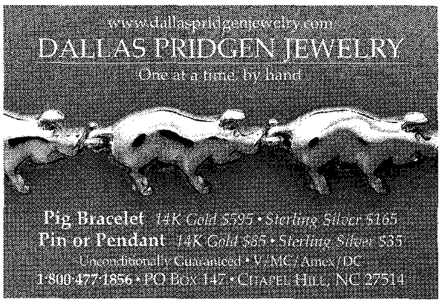

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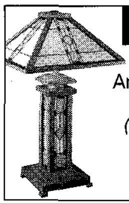

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

UNBOWED

BY IAN FRAZIER

Russell Crowe, the tough-guy, says the WTC disaster made him blink. "I almost feel like retreating to my ranch in Australia. I guess that would be prudent. But I can't bring myself to hide from this. I'm going about my business, mate. I won't let these bastards affect my life, threat or no threat."—*Liz Smith, in the Post, September 25, 2001.*

Russell Crowe's pastoral life on the Aussie range turned scary recently when a herd of cattle charged him. The actor was fixing fences with his ranch hands when his herd stampeded, according to reports from Down Under. Crowe was knocked down by a steer but came away unscathed.—*Rush & Molloy, in the News, November 26, 2001.*

Russell Crowe, the human, is going on with his life, according to publicity sources. Spitting defiance, the popular *anthropos* vowed not to be intimidated despite recent scares. "Sure, I could sit up on the porch all day, which is screened in and has a door that they don't know how to open, the bastards," Crowe said. "And, yes, I'll admit that they got my attention with the noise they make, and the way they look at you, and all that slobbering. And if anybody tells you they can't run fast don't you believe it. Most blokes would take one look and retreat to the equipment shed or climb on top of the pickup. But I couldn't live with myself if I did that."

Crowe emphasizes that he has nothing against ruminants as a whole—he lives and works with them every day. "Look, mate," he explains. "How many stomachs you have, how many times you chew your sodding breakfast—that's completely up to you, far as I'm concerned. You can have fifty stomachs, for all I care. Now, it just so happens that I'm a hominid, with one stomach, one set of teeth, and when I eat something down it goes and goodbye. That's just who I am. I'm bipedal, too, and proud of it. But I'm not going to go round telling you that mine is the only way, so long as you don't start pushing any of your narrow-minded quadrupedalism on me."

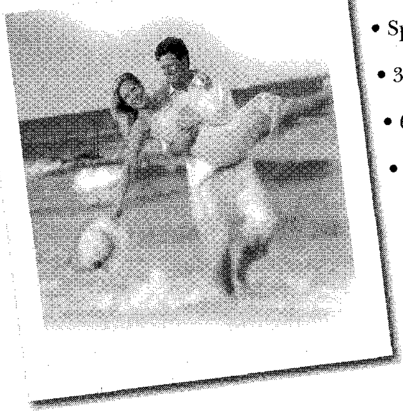
Word in the outback says that Crowe's own species is also unique in its use of language, an accomplishment that's never mentioned by the down-to-earth Aussie star, who forgoes any V.I.P. treatment. In fact, he has always tried to blend in easily with the ranch's ungulates, which makes some of their recent behavior toward him harder to understand. Latest reports indicate that sympathies in the entertainment community are running strongly in Crowe's favor. "I've worked with all the big names—Elsie, Elmer, Ferdinand," one director says. "I can tell you that Russell is a prince compared with them. For one thing, I never have to haze him onto the set in the morning, or wave my hat and flap my arms and yell 'Hsst! Git along!' just so he'll leave his trailer. There's no way in the world he deserved to have this happen."

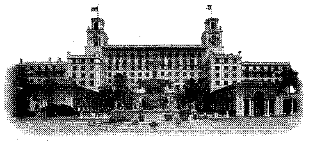
Pastureland opinion has been more guarded. While silently admiring technological advantages made possible by Crowe's opposable thumbs, many of the ranch's inhabitants blow air from their nostrils in what appears to be anger when he is late to feed them their hay. In addition, the expression on their faces seems to reveal a general distrust of Western methods, such as spraying them with fly-tox when most would prefer the traditional practice of standing front to back and swatting one another in the head with their tails. For many, low standards of education are also a problem: ask even a basic question on the difference between Russell Crowe, Cameron Crowe, and James Cameron and the reply is likely to be a blank stare. Here, as in a number of areas, large cultural gaps remain.

Combat veterinarians with years of experience in the field say that real progress will take time. The first thing Crowe and his ranch hands should do, experts agree, is be careful about flaunting the color red, which some here consider blasphemous, even a provocation. Merely wearing red long underwear can be hazardous, if, for example, your trousers fall down and you bend over to pick them up while in a busy part of the range. Insiders caution that a certain kind of bright-red long johns with a buttoned drop seat should be avoided above all. Among a population whose only adornment is tags in their ears, such a display is viewed with blood-maddened eyes, pawing of the earth, and other warning signs. In a few instances, it has even led to skirmishes strikingly similar to the one in which Crowe was involved.

The larger situation is, of course, far more complicated than authorities among the higher primates are letting on. Hollywood sources ascribe the controversy to the old studio system, the discovery of fire, and the making of simple instruments and tools, which led to cranial enlargement and other perks that species not as blessed don't qualify for or understand. Add to this the fact that film stars don't put on weight as efficiently per pound of feed and you can begin to see the dilemma. Clearly, there are going to be trade-offs either way. What's needed is a visionary who can resolve disputes between dairy and non-, leather and Naugahyde, Hereford and Angus, and so on, some of which go back to man's earliest domestication of livestock in the films of Cecil B. De Mille, many years ago. If negotiations are to work under these circumstances, they must include not only the members of *Homo sapiens* but those they milk and barbecue.

For now, Crowe is dusting himself off, brushing away the bits of grass and duff, and planning what he'll do next. "I was unscathed, sport, which means they didn't scathe me," said Crowe in a recent interview. "They want to see scathing, I'll scathe them, you'll see. Listen, George, or whatever your name is, you walk upright, right? Good man—that makes two of us. Now, look, I'm gonna get in this suit, with the head part and horns, see, on me, and this back part here, with the tail, on you. Go ahead, get in. Now we hook it together in the middle here—can you hear me?—and when I say 'Step,' you step with your right leg, and I'll step with my right leg, that's it, now left leg, step, that's the idea. Off we go. They won't know what hit 'em. One thing you can count on with these bastards, they never use their brains." ♦





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ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

GOLDEN TOUCH

In Harlem, Thelma Golden has big plans for contemporary art.

BY IAN PARKER

Thelma Golden likes art, and knows about art, but the thing she wants to do, on as large a scale as possible, is curate—which is to say influence, edit, or, to use her mother's phrase, "get in other people's business." Golden is the person colleagues ask to help with the seating plan for a black-tie dinner. She shouts at the man at the end of her street who will not stop feeding the pigeons. At an opening, wearing a pink-and-orange Diane von Furstenberg dress, she will scold an overloaded artist, "*Be* an artist. Check your bag!" Or she can turn you against an imperfect in-flight cookie: "What do you mean, 'It's not bad'? It's not good. It's not great. If it's not a great cookie, why eat it?"

Art curators used to be connoisseurs—second-born sons of privilege, "whose families were trying to keep them off the proverbial streets of Monte Carlo," as a former director of the Whitney Museum, David A. Ross, recently put it. Art curators are now brokers. They are charmers and negotiators and fund-raisers, working in a world where it sometimes seems that there are more art institutions than there are great works of art to fill them. There were certainly curators in the past who moved in the public sphere, and who paid attention to living artists—people like the MOMA curator Dorothy Miller, whom Golden particularly admires. But today the curator looks more and more like a museum director—someone deep in the money scuffle that has long accompanied the production and distribution of art. Curators have to fight for air: eat lunch with billionaire collectors, drag trustees through the Venice Biennale, appear on the "Charlie Rose" show.

Some find this intolerable, and some find it stimulating, but it is unlikely that anyone is quite as cheerful about the way things have turned out as Golden, the deputy director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem. Golden, who likes to use the word "multitask," seems almost eerily stimulated by the coincidence of disposition and job description, and to spend time with her is to follow in her wake like a minion needing a signature from a striding executive in a nineteen-forties office melodrama. Not everyone would have thought, as Golden did, of laying imperial foundations on a fairly neglected corner (the African-American corner) of perhaps the least welcoming of contemporary arts. They might have looked for a place where fewer men wear loafers without socks. But Golden, whose ambition is both extreme and matter-of-fact, knows that curating modern art pulls you into conversations with people who have cash and power, and that the curator with ambitions beyond art—and with natural political skills—is entitled to entertain ideas of world domination. "Other curators just make their shows," an artist told her recently. "But I think you think your mission is to find good artists." Golden laughed. "No," she said. "I'm changing the world."

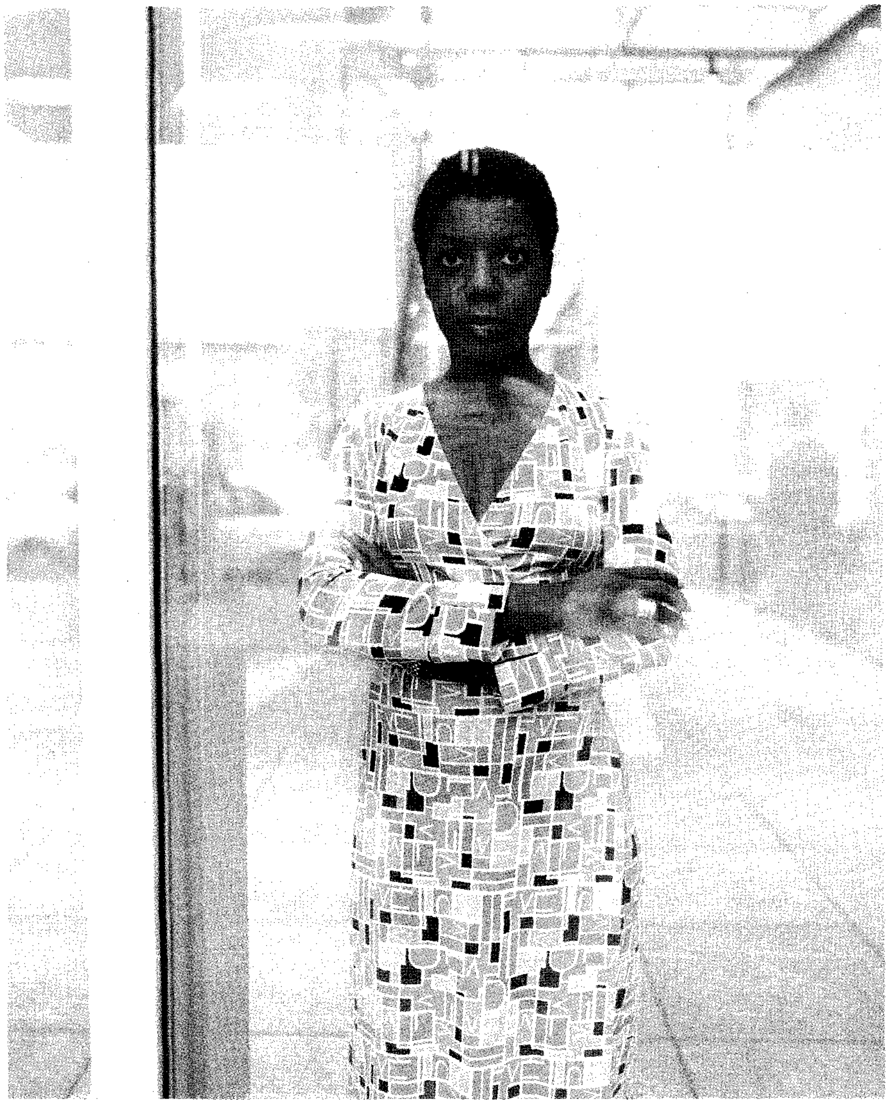
Golden, who sometimes calls herself a "producer," understands how to have an impact. At the Whitney, where she worked from 1991 to 1998, she was known for her championing of young black conceptual artists, and for including them in the Whitney Biennial in 1993 and in the "Black Male" show of 1994—high-profile exhibitions that opened the museum's door to the then modish currents of multiculturalism and identity politics. And now the Studio Museum, which Golden joined two years ago, is shaking off its reputation as an earnest gallery on the edge of the known art world; she has made the museum matter. Her greatest success there has been an exhibition of a new generation of artists whom she calls (with partial irony) "post-black"; these are artists who have muted or rerouted the explicitly racial agenda of their predecessors.

"You know when you're making whipped cream, and it's liquid, and there's that moment just before it becomes the cream?" Golden asked me. "That's the moment I work in. I have to be in motion." She sits on the federal committee that selects the artists who will represent America at international biennials. She speaks at conferences. She poses for fashion shoots in *O* and *Harper's Bazaar*. She chats at parties with Spike Lee and Wynton Marsalis and friends who work in publishing and finance. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the chair of Afro-American studies at Harvard, says, "She's very comfortable with herself, and also with power. I'm sure she will become the first black director of a major white art institution." Greg Tate, the essayist and *Village Voice* critic, has said that Golden is becoming "one of those pivotal centrist figures in African-American life." Russell Simmons, the rap entrepreneur, calls her "an inspiration." After Golden has introduced you to Simmons and to David Dinkins, hugged them both, and then been pulled away to meet Bill Clinton, you can forgive her for having said, with a smile, "Nobody doesn't know me. Who doesn't know me? Nobody."

On a clear, warm morning some months ago, Golden was on a hill above Aspen, Colorado, watching her friend the artist Glenn Ligon put on a crash helmet and prepare to paraglide. "They say black men are not supposed to die a natural death," he said. "But I don't think we're meant to jump off mountains." Two other friends of Golden's were there: one was Byron Kim, a Korean-American artist from New York; the other, the man who had invited them all to Aspen, for a short vacation with some art-world duties, was Fred Henry, a wealthy white man in his mid-fifties. Once a Whitney trustee, Henry now supports contemporary artists through a family fund called the Bohen Foundation. As the others got ready to leap, Golden sat on the grass looking uneasy, wearing jeans and sneakers rather than the usual designer clothes that she orders at the beginning of each season. "I think this is the first time I've ever seen Thelma perplexed," Henry said. Golden said, "If I'd known my cell phone wasn't going to work up here, I would have stayed in the house."

To the surprise of some people who invite her to lecture but know only her name, Thelma Golden is not sixty years old and Jewish. She is thirty-five and black, with cropped hair and a small face. At five feet tall, she is very slight, which means that some people find it hard not to pick her up and carry her around. "Stanley Crouch always lifts me off the ground. But he weighs . . . more than two hundred pounds and I'm about ninety on a good day, so what am I going to do?" Her manner is not lordly, but it has a teasing, camp brusqueness that does not quite disguise a genuine sense of entitlement. When she's not speaking, Golden becomes a little disengaged, and there are points in a dinner-table conversation when others laugh but she simply says, "Exactly, exactly," as if laughing took up too much time. But her concentrated attention can be transfixing—the children of her friends divulge all their secrets to her. "She'd make a wonderful stage mother," says her friend David Alan Grier, the comedian and former star of "In Living Color." "If you were her daughter, you would be *in* that play."

Golden never stops curating, and during the summer Aspen is full of vacationing art people, so there were lunches and gallery visits, and, on a short hike up the valley, Golden and Henry analyzed the politics of an attempt by the Bohen Foundation to fund a major New York installation by a British artist. She visited the apartment of a local gallery owner and real-estate mogul, noting a top-grade Jean-Michel Basquiat, a Cy Twombly, Lucian Freud etchings and Robert Mapplethorpe prints, and a dazzling early Peter Halley



Golden is a curator who calls herself a "producer." Photograph by Matthias Clamer.

PAPERWORK
S.GROSS

• •

over the bed. (On the mantelpiece was a framed newspaper clipping: "You will earn thousands of dollars every day doing nothing.") At a party thrown by Henry during her visit, Golden accepted the gift of a work by the young African-American artist Adler Guerrier. "Thelma being in the museum makes me want to have this artist there," the donor told me.

Golden inspires confidence in a world where it is easy to feel you have been duped. People are reassured when she takes charge. One evening in Aspen, as she and Ligon lay side by side on the floor, waiting for a Bikram yoga class to begin, Ligon reminded her of the opening of his 1998 show "Unbecoming," in which he had juxtaposed family photographs with images from gay pornography. Ligon had invited his stepmother, who was not familiar with the work, and with whom he had never discussed his sexual orientation. "It was weird," Ligon said. "It's an opening, there are five hundred people, and I was, like, I really don't have time to come out right now." Ligon introduced his stepmother to Golden, and then moved away. Golden took control, showed the stepmother around, and fell into an intense discussion of Ligon and his work. As Golden remembers it, "She was saying to me, 'I hope Glenn knows I respect his life and his choices.' "

In the yoga studio, Golden looked at Ligon and laughed. "We had a moment, honey. We had major sister bonding. I had your coming-out talk for you. I came out for you."

"Now, that's a full-service curator," Ligon said.

Thelma Golden knew she wanted to be a curator when she was ten years old, and was given a board game called Masterpiece, which included reproductions of paintings from the Art Institute of Chicago. The game was dull, and Golden began sticking the cards on the wall with Fun-Tak. From this moment, she says, she was certain that her future career would involve art and Fun-Tak. She was living in St. Albans, Queens, a quiet, mostly black middle-class neighborhood, in the house where her parents still live. She grew up wearing denim pants suits and lime-green clogs, and for a couple of years she was a child model: she once appeared in an advertisement for a bank dressed as a flower girl. Her father and mother, whose parents were Caribbean immigrants, were active in black civic and social organizations. They created what Golden calls a "weird kind of radicalism" in the house, weaving liberal instincts into a strand of social conservatism. Golden never saw her father without a tie. (He is an insurance broker.) She and her brother, who is one year younger, were encouraged to watch their language and their manners. Golden went to a private school in nearby Roslyn, where she was the first African-American girl to graduate. After class, Golden would sometimes help her father in his brokerage, answering the phone in her best Mary Tyler Moore voice: "Golden and Golden, how may I help you?"

Golden was happy enough at school and at home. But Queens did not suit her. There was too much talk of aluminum siding, bulk buying, and impatiens, "which are the most pitiful flowers I've ever seen—the most dinky, pissy little flowers." She dreamed of Manhattan—or Brooklyn would do, where an aunt lived an alluring bohemian life. She began studying art history in sixth grade, and, around the age when another youth might have taken comfort in rock and roll, she found contemporary art. In the *Times* and in *New York*, she discovered Jean-Michel Basquiat and the East Village and Mary Boone, the gallery owner, photographed at Odeon next to David Salle. "I read the *New York* Mary Boone article ten times. I studied that photograph of her at Odeon. I knew I was going to be in the art world. I knew I was going to know Mary Boone. I knew I was going to go to Odeon."

Golden began to take the train into Manhattan to visit galleries and museums. She copied MOMA labels into her notebook ("This Monet represents . . ."). In her last two years of high school, when she was commuting to the New Lincoln School, on the Upper East Side, she worked as an intern at the Metropolitan Museum three evenings a week. The other evenings, she could often be found at Bloomingdale's with her friend Alexandra Llewellyn (who is now married to Tom Clancy), buying Willi Smith and Fiorucci, not to wear but to preserve in tissue paper, as works of art.

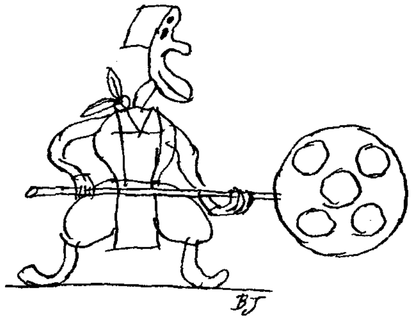
In 1983, she started Smith College. In a class of six hundred, there were twenty or so black women. "I was in heaven. I'd never been with so many black people who were not my family." She majored in art history and African-American studies, and soon became frustrated by the failure of both faculties to recognize black American artists at a time when the academy was overrun with dissertations about Toni Morrison. By Golden's own measure, her Smith grades were unremarkable; she was most engaged when working in the Smith College Museum of Art, whose collection included "an amazing, amazing Sol LeWitt. I could rebuild that Sol LeWitt from memory, I spent so long looking at it." Golden says today, "You know people who get into going to action films? That's what looking at art is for me, a complete intellectual, emotional, physical experience."

After Smith, Golden returned to New York, where she worked as a curatorial assistant at the Whitney and as an intern at the Studio Museum. In 1991, David Ross, who had just become the director of the Whitney, offered her a full-time curatorial job. Many were delighted by the appointment of a young black woman at the Whitney. But some thought she was underqualified: she had no experience in another major museum, no record of scholarly publication, no advanced degrees. These kinds of complaints can still be heard. One critic recently told me that Golden is "savvy at keeping up with intellectual fashion, but not an intellectual powerhouse." On the other hand, Henry Louis Gates calls her "extraordinarily well educated," and Richard Powell, an art historian at Duke, says that she is a "curator's curator. She knows what's going to work in a particular space." Golden herself describes the process of arranging art works as quasi-musical—she walks through a space humming dah-dah-DAH, for small-small-large.

Ross put her in charge of the Whitney's Philip Morris branch, on Park Avenue, where she curated successful small shows and gathered around her a group of young African-American conceptual artists. Although Golden thought of herself as the Whitney's black curator, not its curator of black art, one role was sure to pull the other behind it. "One of the books that were so important to me at Smith was Paula Gidding's 'When and Where I Enter,' and the title comes from the great quote from Anna Julia Cooper, 'When and where I enter . . . the whole Negro race enters with me.' And I certainly felt that way at the Whitney. I was walking in there every day with hundreds of people." She did not want to restrict herself to working only with black artists, but she also wanted to avoid the "weird legacy of racial self-hatred and doubt" that could have led her away from them. Besides, the work of the new generation—Ligon, Lorna Simpson, Gary Simmons, Fred Wilson, Carrie Mae Weems—seemed particularly strong. "I felt I had an amazing opportunity to work with black artists who were just better—they were fierce."

These artists had an interest in racial themes, stereotypes, and gender. They liked to use texts in their work: passages from James Baldwin, newspaper stories, or the overheard comments of people looking at Mapplethorpe's black nudes. Their installations incorporated a boxer's punching bag, or gold-plated sneakers set against a police lineup. Gary Simmons's "The Garden of Hate" was, to quote Golden's own catalogue description, "a round flower bed filled with red and white azaleas in the shape of the Ku Klux Klan's cross. Rising from the center is a flagless flagpole." (Some of the azaleas were later replanted in Golden's parents' garden in St. Albans.) This was art inspired by the multicultural arguments of the nineteen-eighties, by the attention given to cultural products not made by white men. And it was art made in the wake of Rodney King's beating, in 1991. Those videotaped images deeply informed Golden's own political sensibility, and reminded her of "how much had not happened" to change attitudes about race in America. She says her form of protest was simply to be what she was—a black woman at the Whitney. "My personal politics are so submerged in my existence. I feel I've never had to protest, because I am the protest."

For decades, from the Harlem Renaissance, in the nineteen-twenties, to the Black Arts Movement, of the nineteen-sixties and beyond, there had been an implicit question in much African-American art: whether its first duty was to raise race consciousness or to engage fully in the white-dominated cultural aesthetic of the day—whether the struggle should be over politics or paint. Or, as Richard Powell puts it, whether black art should value "artistic singularity over racial unity." There now seemed to be an opportunity to short-circuit that discussion. Golden's presence at the Whitney, and the energy with which she lobbied for her favorites, gave the new generation of artists an opportunity to find their way in the mainstream art world of Chelsea and SoHo while still making race their subject.



But not everyone agreed about the achievement of these artists. When some of them were included in the controversial, youthful, gender- and race-oriented Whitney Biennial of 1993, which Golden helped curate, the art critic Michael Kimmelman wrote, in the *Times*, "I hate the show." (Visitors were handed a button designed by a California artist which read, "I can't imagine ever wanting to be white.") A year later, more of this work was seen in a show whose concept was entirely Golden's, "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." It, too, caused a sensation, and was knocked around by reviewers. But this time the real to-do came from within the black establishment, which, like any other establishment, was likely to resist a new generation's rebelliousness. Some felt that if a major institution had found room for an exhibition of black images it was a pity that so many of them should include guns, racism, and Rodney King. Lowery Stokes Sims, the trailblazing black curator of an earlier generation, who was then at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, said, "Older people, the forty-pluses, were desirous of an exhibition of positive images." Instead, they got sex and violence. Some of the older black artists who had long felt starved of mainstream recognition also complained. They had seen in Golden's appointment an opportunity to plug alleged historical gaps in the Whitney's collection, but "Black Male" made it clear that Golden's central project was to support the new. She was forced to defend herself on radio and television. Golden's philanthropist friend Peter Norton, whose foundation helped pay for the show, watched aggrieved guests shouting at her in his house. "She was blown away by the anger," David Ross says.

There was a wildly oversubscribed opening party in a midtown night club—the line ran around the block—with Funkmaster Flex d.j.'ing. The next morning, Golden took off for a Miami hotel, exhausted, and lay in bed for twenty-four hours eating tuna burgers and watching pay-per-view movies. At the age of twenty-eight, she had curated a cultural moment: there had never been such public turmoil at the Whitney. "I don't have to do another 'Black Male' ever," Golden says now. "And that's a fabulous feeling. I think one can have a career where you're always walking around with this ideal show in your head, and working toward it, and God forbid you should never get to it. By mistake, I did that show first."

In 1998, David Ross left the Whitney to become the director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (a post he has since left). A new director, Maxwell Anderson, was appointed. Soon after his arrival at the Whitney, when Golden says she had already begun working on the 2000 Biennial, they had a meeting during which he offered her what she describes as "some little half a job with half a role with half a contract." She resigned a few days later. "You've spent your whole life wearing Manolo Blahniks and somebody's taking you to Payless, you know what I'm saying? And unless you're really desperate and your feet are bare, you're not going to do it."

At the time, her sudden departure was widely understood to be a dismissal. Anderson denies any such intention. "I felt then and I feel now that she's an extraordinarily talented curator," Anderson says. "In times of change, feelings run high." In any case, art-world colleagues were quick to show support. Golden lunched tirelessly at the Mercer Kitchen, and accepted a stopgap job as a curator for the Peter Norton Family Foundation. Then, a year later, Lowery Stokes Sims left the Met to become director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, and Golden was asked to join her.

SUMMER'S FULLNESS

In summer, above a mountain stream scented with willows
where purple butterflies, red admirals, and swallowtails, heavy with beauty,
perform their final flight above the glittering world, where the air
is so drenched in essential oils that you could pour it
into glasses and feel its convex lens beneath your fingers;
in August, when resin burns above the boughs of pines, and pinecones
crackle as if licked by tongues of everlasting flame,
and a sea authentically blue sways peacefully below
like a victor, a king who's conquered the Persians, and all
his yachts bow gently with every passing wave,
and swimmers submerged in translucent bedding
move with infinite slowness along invisible lines,
along the white threads binding every substance,
and you hear the vast whisper of creatures finally content,
when it seems that even insects must have their own Dionysus;
in August, when Europe's bustle suddenly ceases
and factories stop short, and tourists laugh loudly
on the beaches of the Ligurian Sea, just take two steps
behind the scenes—and there a dense grove's semidarkness may conceal
the shadows of those who lived briefly, in fear, without hope, the shadows
of our brothers, our sisters, the shadows of Ravensbrück and Kolyma,
poor angels of a black salvation, watching us greedily.

—*Adam Zagajewski*

(*Translated, from the Polish, by Clare Cavanagh.*)

The Studio Museum, which is about the same age as Golden, had been drifting for a decade. Today, under the new regime, the drift has stopped, and annual attendance figures have risen from sixty thousand to more than a hundred thousand. In part, the change has to do with the international reputations of some of the African-American artists now in the middle of their careers—Glenn Ligon and Gary Simmons, for example, and a younger artist, Kara Walker, who recently won a MacArthur "genius" grant. It also has something to do with New York's changing relationship to Harlem: the museum's opening parties used to be on Sunday afternoons, because of anxieties about 125th Street after dark; today they are more often on weekday evenings, like any other art party. But the change is due mainly to the taste and the downtown influence of Sims and Golden, and to Golden's first group exhibition, "Freestyle," at the Studio Museum last spring. Golden showed the work of twenty-eight emerging black artists, and described them in the catalogue as "adamant about not being labeled as 'black' artists." Their work—which ranged from cartoon figures to minimalist grids and phone records of calls made to Africa—for the most part did not put race and racial identity in the foreground. Instead, Golden suggested, it was "post-black."

The show was well received in the press. In *Newsweek*, Peter Plagens called "Freestyle" "essential" and said that it "puts the museum on the map." But there was some private grumbling about intellectual capriciousness: in which world did Golden live, black or post-black? Golden's problem, in part, is that "Black Male" had created such a stir—a stir connected to Golden's powers of persuasion as well as to the relative rarity of black group shows at major institutions—that it risked seeming like a manifesto: this was how every black artist worked, or should; no other African-American view of the world was authentic, no other art made sense. "Freestyle" ran the same risk. When I asked her about this, Golden said, "It's not that every black artist works in the same way at the same time. God forbid you were an abstract painter during multiculturalism"—a statement that some artists might hear as condolence from an executioner.

Today, Golden reserves the right to curate post-black artists and any other artists, while continuing to show and vacation with her pre-post-black friends. In fact, many of the artists Golden once worked with have also moved on, and the line between the Biennial/"Black Male" artists (mad-eyed revolutionaries) and the "Freestyle" artists (self-consciously detached ironists) is as misleading as that between any two cultural generations. But it is not a complete fiction. Glenn Ligon, who coined the phrase "post-black" in conversation with Golden, meaning it ironically, recently said, “You try getting your post-black ass into a taxi in Harlem.” He added, “It was artists of my generation positioning themselves around multiculturalism that allowed these children to be post-black. But they don’t acknowledge that. In some ways, it’s just, ‘Why would you be bothering to deal with *x*, *y*, and *z* issues?’ ”

Golden, disagreeing, reminded Ligon that if you visit the studio of any post-black artist you find a shelf of pre-post-black catalogues. “Your work is so known, and so out there,” she said. “That’s certainly what I’ve felt talking to them. There wasn’t room. There isn’t a *need* to do it or redo it.”

One recent evening, Golden met me at a bar in SoHo, where a friend of hers was having a birthday party. The guests were mostly young and successful African-Americans: corporate lawyers, financiers, record-company executives. (She identified one as an ex-boyfriend, but chose not to talk about any present-day replacement.) She stood at the bar while an old friend, a flirtatious investment banker, described losing his nerve at an auction. A Basquiat drawing had come up, but he did not act, and now he regretted it. “I didn’t want to be impulsive. But I thought I should have gone for it. I wish you’d been there.”

It is sometimes hard to distinguish between people’s faith in Golden herself and their faith in her visual judgment: she is like the classmate whose experimental pop records you forced yourself to like—and then did like—because her enthusiasm was so compelling. The room was full of people who had been tugged into contemporary art by Golden: they had become friends of the Studio Museum; their fortunes were perhaps starting to evolve into foundations. Henry Louis Gates points out Golden’s capacity to “call on people who have comparable positions in other areas of the society, such as Wall Street, or the academy, and to bring them in, to make the connections.” It is not a revolutionary way of working; rather, Golden is following an old-fashioned model of engagement and advancement, one that her radical-conservative parents might recognize. “Thelma’s working in a traditional form, working in a traditional institution—the museum—bringing in high-end individuals to participate and fund projects,” Kellie Jones, a friend of Golden’s who teaches art history and African-American studies at Yale, says. “But what’s radical is that she’s trying to develop an African-American coterie of people who will support art. It’s a very difficult job; there’s not a tradition.”

As the party began to break up, the investment banker cried to a friend, “I didn’t want the Basquiat anyway!” Then he picked Golden up off the ground. Golden shrugged. She said, “You see what I mean?”

Golden met Bill Clinton at a reception in Sylvia’s restaurant in Harlem. He had just taken possession of his new offices on West 125th Street, for which Golden had been choosing art from the museum’s collection: she had recommended, among other works, Romare Bearden’s great 1979 print series “The Return of Odysseus.” People were pressing forward to shake Clinton’s hand, but Golden stood to one side. “I’m not a crowd person,” she said. “I don’t do crowds. We can do lunch.” Then she was pulled toward Clinton by a member of his staff; they shook hands, and for a while Clinton would not let go.

In her office, a block or two away, Golden said, “The art world in general, it’s slightly sleepy. There are so many other worlds I’m so much more interested in.” Golden likes to quote a passage from Toni Morrison’s “Jazz”: “I’m crazy about this city. . . . A city like this one makes me dream tall and feel in on things.” Golden has reached a place of precocious influence; the art world looks different because of her. At the moment, she is planning a show on black architecture, a Gary Simmons retrospective, and an exhibition of what she calls “black romantic” art: hyperfigurative, street-poster images of sports stars and underdressed women. But Golden wants an empire in her own image, built somewhere in the space between her heroes Oprah Winfrey and Henry Louis Gates. It is time to edit magazines and make movies and television programs. She already has a name: T.H.G. Inc. “Pronounced ‘Think’—trust me, that’ll make sense,” she said. Then she showed me around the museum—with something of the air of a cultural grande dame revisiting a former place of work for the benefit of a documentary crew. ♦

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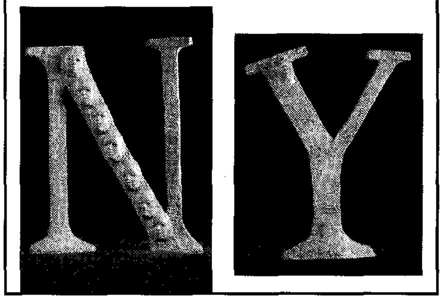

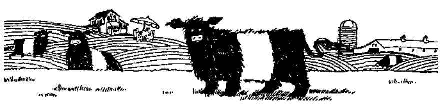

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PROFILES

THE COUNTER-TERRORIST

John O'Neill was an F.B.I. agent with an obsession: the growing threat of Al Qaeda.

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

The legend of John P. O'Neill, who lost his life at the World Trade Center on September 11th, begins with a story by Richard A. Clarke, the national coördinator for counter-terrorism in the White House from the first Bush Administration until last year. On a Sunday morning in February, 1995, Clarke went to his office to review intelligence cables that had come in over the weekend. One of the cables reported that Ramzi Yousef, the suspected mastermind behind the first World Trade Center bombing, two years earlier, had been spotted in Pakistan. Clarke immediately called the F.B.I. A man whose voice was unfamiliar to him answered the phone. "O'Neill," he growled.

"Who are you?" Clarke said.

"I'm John O'Neill," the man replied. "Who the hell are you?"

O'Neill had just been appointed chief of the F.B.I.'s counter-terrorism section, in Washington. He was forty-two years old, and had been transferred from the bureau's Chicago office. After driving all night, he had gone directly to headquarters that Sunday morning without dropping off his bags. When he heard Clarke's report about Yousef, O'Neill entered the F.B.I.'s Strategic Information Operations Center (SIOC) and telephoned Thomas Pickard, the head of the bureau's National Security Division in New York. Pickard then called Mary Jo White, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, who had indicted Yousef in the bombing case.

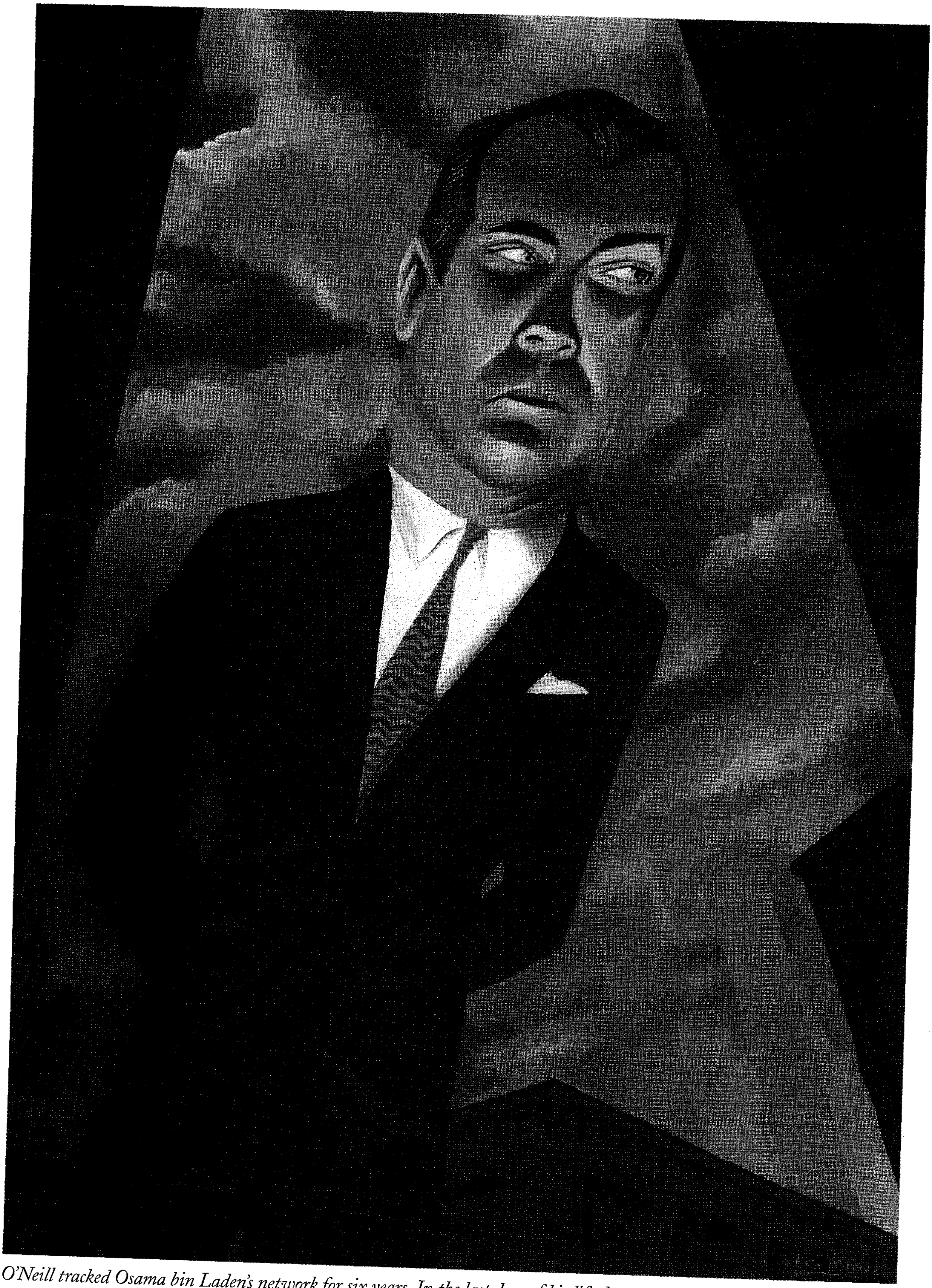
One of O'Neill's new responsibilities was to put together a team to bring the suspect home. It was composed of agents who were working on the case, a State Department representative, a medical doctor, a hostage-rescue team, and a fingerprint expert whose job was to make sure that the suspect was, in fact, Ramzi Yousef. Under ordinary circumstances, the host country would be asked to detain the suspect until extradition paperwork had been signed and the F.B.I. could place the man in custody. There was no time for that. Yousef was reportedly preparing to board a bus for Peshawar. Unless he was apprehended, he would soon cross the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan, where he would be out of reach. There was only one F.B.I. agent in Pakistan at the time, along with several agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration and the State Department's diplomatic-security bureau. "Our Ambassador had to get in his car and go ripping across town to get the head of the local military intelligence," Clarke recalled. "The chief gave him his own personal aides, and this ragtag bunch of American law-enforcement officials and a couple of Pakistani soldiers set off to catch Yousef before he got on the bus." O'Neill, working around the clock for the next three days, coördinated the entire effort. At 10 A.M. Pakistan time, on Tuesday, February 7th, SIOC was informed that the World Trade Center bomber was in custody.

During the next six years, O'Neill became the bureau's most committed tracker of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network of terrorists as they struck against American interests around the world. Brash, ambitious, often full of himself, O'Neill had a confrontational personality that brought him powerful enemies. Even so, he was too valuable to ignore. He was the point man in the investigation of the terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia, East Africa, and Yemen. At a time when the Clinton Administration was struggling to decide how to respond to the terrorist threat, O'Neill, along with others in the F.B.I. and the C.I.A., realized that Al Qaeda was relentless and resourceful and that its ultimate target was America itself. In the last days of his life, after he had taken a new job as the chief of security for the World Trade Center, he was warning friends, "We're due."

"I *am* the F.B.I.," John O'Neill liked to boast. He had wanted to work for the bureau since boyhood, when he watched Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., as the buttoned-down Inspector Lewis Erskine in the TV series "The F.B.I." O'Neill was born in 1952 and brought up in Atlantic City, where his mother drove a cab for a small taxi business that she and his father owned. After graduating from Holy Spirit High School, he got a job as a fingerprint clerk with the F.B.I. During his first semester in college, he married his high-school sweetheart, Christine, and when he was twenty their son, John P. O'Neill, Jr., was born. O'Neill put himself through a master's program in forensics at George Washington University by serving as a tour guide at the F.B.I. headquarters. In 1976, he became a full-time agent in the bureau's office in Baltimore; ten years later, he returned to headquarters and served as an inspector. In 1991, he was named assistant special agent in charge in the Chicago office. In 1994, he received the additional assignment of supervising VAPCON, a national investigation into violence against abortion providers. The following year, he transferred to headquarters to become the counter-terrorism chief.

John Lipka, an agent who met O'Neill during the VAPCON probe, marvelled at his ability to move so easily from investigating organized crime and official corruption to the thornier field of counter-terrorism. "He was a very quick study," Lipka told me. "I'd been working terrorism since '86, but he'd walk out of the Hoover building, flag a cab, and I'd brief him on the way to the White House. Then he'd give a presentation, and I'd be shocked that he

MARK ULRIKSEN



O'Neill tracked Osama bin Laden's network for six years. In the last days of his life, he was warning friends, "We're due."

grasped everything I had been working on for weeks."

O'Neill entered the bureau in the J. Edgar Hoover era, and throughout his career he had something of the old-time G-man about him. He talked tough, in a New Jersey accent that many loved to imitate. He was darkly handsome, with black eyes and slicked-back hair. In a culture that favors discreet anonymity, he cut a memorable figure. He favored fine cigars and Chivas Regal and water with a twist, and carried a nine-millimetre automatic strapped to his ankle. His manner was bluff and dominating, but he was always immaculately, even fussily, dressed. One of his colleagues in Washington took note of O'Neill's "night-club wardrobe"—black double-breasted suits, semitransparent black socks, and ballet-slipper shoes. "He had very delicate feet and hands, and, with his polished fingernails, he made quite an impression."

In Washington, O'Neill became part of a close-knit group of counter-terrorism experts which formed around Richard Clarke. In the web of federal agencies concerned with terrorism, Clarke was the spider. Everything that touched the web eventually came to his attention. The members of this inner circle, which was known as the Counter-terrorism Security Group (C.S.G.), were drawn mainly from the C.I.A., the National Security Council, and the upper tiers of the Defense Department, the Justice Department, and the State Department. They met every week in the White House Situation Room. "John could lead a discussion at that level," R. P. Eddy, who was an N.S.C. director at the time, told me. "He was not just the guy you turned to for a situation report. He was the guy who would say the thing that everybody in the room wishes he had said."

In July of 1996, when T.W.A. Flight 800 crashed off the coast of Long Island, there was widespread speculation in the C.S.G. that it had been shot down by a shoulder-fired missile from the shore. Dozens of witnesses reported having seen an ascending flare that culminated in an explosion. According to Clarke, O'Neill, working with the Defense Department, determined the height of the aircraft and its distance from shore at the time of the explosion, and demonstrated that it was out of the range of a Stinger missile. He proposed that the flare could have been caused by the ignition of leaking fuel from the aircraft, and he persuaded the C.I.A. to do a video simulation of this scenario, which proved to be strikingly similar to the witnesses' accounts. It is now generally agreed that mechanical failure, not terrorism, caused the explosion of T.W.A. Flight 800.

Clarke immediately spotted in O'Neill an obsessiveness about the dangers of terrorism which mirrored his own. "John had the same problems with the bureaucracy that I had," Clarke told me. "Prior to September 11th, a lot of people who were working full time on terrorism thought it was no more than a nuisance. They didn't understand that Al Qaeda was enormously powerful and insidious and that it was not going to stop until it really hurt us. John and some other senior officials knew that. The impatience really grew in us as we dealt with the dolts who didn't understand."

Osama bin Laden had been linked to terrorism since the first World Trade Center bombing, in 1993. His name had turned up on a list of donors to an Islamic charity that helped finance the bombing, and defendants in the case referred to a "Sheikh Osama" in a recorded conversation. "We started looking at who was involved in these events, and it seemed like an odd group of people getting together," Clarke recalled. "They clearly had money. We'd see C.I.A. reports that referred to 'financier Osama bin Laden,' and we'd ask ourselves, 'Who the hell is he?' The more we drilled down, the more we realized that he was not just a financier—he was the leader. John said, 'We've got to get this guy. He's building a network. Everything leads back to him.' Gradually, the C.I.A. came along with us."

O'Neill worked with Clarke to establish clear lines of responsibility among the intelligence agencies, and in 1995 their efforts resulted in a Presidential directive giving the F.B.I. the lead authority both in investigating and in preventing acts of terrorism wherever Americans or American interests were threatened. After the April, 1995, bombing in Oklahoma City, O'Neill formed a separate section for domestic terrorism, but he concentrated on redesigning and expanding the foreign-terrorism branch. He organized a swap of deputies between his office and the C.I.A.'s counter-terrorism center, despite resistance from both agencies.

"John told me that if you put the resources and talents of the C.I.A.'s counter-terrorism center and the F.B.I.'s counter-terrorism section together on any issue, we can solve it—but we need both," Lipka recalled. In January, 1996, O'Neill helped create a C.I.A. station, code-named Alex, with a single-minded purpose. "Its mission was not just track-

"Daddy, does this mean we're poor now?"

ing down bin Laden but focussing on his infrastructure, his capabilities, where he got his funding, where were his bases of operation and his training centers," Lipka said. "Many of the same things we are doing now, that station was already doing then."

The coöperation that O'Neill achieved between the bureau and the C.I.A. was all the more remarkable because opinions about him were sharply polarized. O'Neill could be brutal, not only with underlings but also with superiors when they failed to meet his expectations. An agent in the Chicago office who felt his disapproval told me, "He was smarter than everybody else, and he would use that fine mind to absolutely humiliate people."

In Washington, there was one terrorist-related crisis after another. "We worked a bomb a month," Lipka recalled. Often, O'Neill would break for dinner and be back in the office at ten. "Most people couldn't keep up with his passion and intensity," Lipka said. "He was able to identify those people who shared his work ethic, and then he tasked the living shit out of them, with E-mails and status briefings and phones and pagers going off all the time, to the point that I asked him, 'When do you sleep?' " O'Neill began acquiring nicknames that testified to his relentlessness, among them the Count, the Prince of Darkness, and Satan.

But many in the bureau who disliked O'Neill eventually became devoted followers. He went to extraordinary lengths to help when they faced health problems or financial difficulty. "He was our Elvis—you knew when he was in the house," Kevin Giblin, the F.B.I.'s head of terrorist warning, recalled.

O'Neill's tenure in the F.B.I. coincided with the internationalization of crime and law enforcement. Prior to his appointment as the bureau's counterterrorism chief, the F.B.I. had limited its involvement to operations in which Americans had been killed. "O'Neill came in with a much more global approach," Lipka told me. One of his innovations was to catalogue all the explosives used by terrorists worldwide. "He thought, When a bomb goes off in the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, even though no Americans were killed, why don't we offer our assistance, so that we can put that information on a global forensic database," Lipka said. Since 1984, the F.B.I. had had the authority to investigate crimes against Americans abroad, but that mandate had been handicapped by a lack of coöperation with foreign police agencies. O'Neill made a habit of entertaining every foreign cop or intelligence agent who entered his orbit. He called it his "night job."

"John's approach to law enforcement was that of the old Irish ward boss to governance: you collect friendships and debts and obligations, because you never know when you're going to need them," Clarke told me. He was constantly on the phone, doing favors, massaging contacts. By the time he died, he had become one of the best-known policemen in the world. "You'd be in Moscow at some bilateral exchange," Giblin recalled, "and you'd see three or four men approach and say, in broken English, 'Do you know John O'Neill?' "

The need to improve relationships with foreign police agencies became apparent in November, 1995, when five Americans and two Indians died in the bombing of an American-run military-training center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The F.B.I. sent over a small squad to investigate, but the agents had scarcely arrived when the Saudis arrested four suspects and beheaded them, foreclosing any opportunity to learn who was behind the operation.

In the spring of 1996, Jamal Ahmed al-Fadl, who had supported a plot by Al Qaeda against American soldiers in Somalia four years earlier, arrived at the American Embassy in Asmara, Eritrea. The C.I.A. debriefed him for six months, then turned him over to the F.B.I., which put him in the witness-protection program. Fadl provided the first extensive road map of the bin Laden terrorist empire. "Fadl was a gold mine," an intelligence source who was present during some of the interviews told me. "He described the network, bin Laden's companies, his farms, his operations in the ports." Fadl also talked about bin Laden's desire to attack Americans, including his ambition to obtain uranium. The news was widely circulated among members of the intelligence community, including O'Neill, and yet the State Department refused to list Al Qaeda as a terrorist organization.

On June 25, 1996, O'Neill arranged a retreat for F.B.I. and C.I.A. agents at the bureau's training center in Quantico, Virginia. "We had hot dogs

"Point well taken—but I just came here to get drunk."

• •

"Run along. Snow is time-sensitive."

and hamburgers, and John let the C.I.A. guys on the firing range, because they never get to shoot," Giblin recalled. "Then everyone's beeper went off." Another explosion in Saudi Arabia, at the Khobar Towers, a military-housing complex in Dhahran, had killed nineteen American soldiers and injured more than five hundred other people, including Saudis. O'Neill assembled a team of nearly a hundred agents, support personnel, and members of various police agencies. The next day, they were on an Air Force transport plane to Saudi Arabia. A few weeks later, they were joined by O'Neill and the F.B.I. director, Louis Freeh.

It was evening when the two men arrived in Dhahran. The disaster site was a vast crater illuminated by lights on high stanchions; nearby lay charred automobiles and upended Humvees. Looming above the debris were the ruins of the housing complex. This was the largest bomb that the F.B.I. had ever investigated, even more powerful than the explosives that had killed a hundred and sixty-eight people in Oklahoma City in 1995. O'Neill walked through the rubble, greeting exhausted agents who were sifting the sand for evidence. Under a tarp nearby, investigators were gradually reconstructing fragments of the truck that had carried the bomb.

In the Khobar Towers case, neither the Saudis nor the State Department seemed eager to pursue a trail of evidence that pointed to Iranian terrorists as the likeliest perpetrators. The Clinton Administration did not relish the prospect of military retaliation against a country that seemed to be moderating its anti-Western policies, and, according to Clarke, the Saudis impeded the F.B.I. investigation because they were worried about the American response. "They were afraid that we would have to bomb Iran," I was told by a Clinton Administration official, who added that that would have been a likely course of action.

Freeh was initially optimistic that the Saudis would coöperate, but O'Neill became increasingly frustrated, and eventually a rift seems to have developed between the two men. "John started telling Louis things Louis didn't want to hear," Clarke said. "John told me that, after one of the many trips he and Freeh took to the Mideast to get better coöperation from the Saudis, they boarded the Gulfstream to come home and Freeh says, 'Wasn't that a great trip? I think they're really going to help us.' And John says, 'You've got to be kidding. They didn't give us anything. They were just shining sunshine up your ass.' For the next twelve hours, Freeh didn't say another word to him."

Freeh denies that this conversation took place. "Of course, John and I discussed the results of every trip at that time," he wrote to me in an E-mail. "However, John never made that statement to me. . . . John and I had an excellent relationship based on trust and friendship."

O'Neill longed to get out of Washington so that he could "go operational," as he told John Lipka, and supervise cases again. In January, 1997, he became special agent in charge of the National Security Division in New York, the bureau's largest and most prestigious field office. When he arrived, he dumped four boxes of Rolodex cards on the desk of his new secretary, Lorraine di Taranto. Then he handed her a list of everyone he wanted to meet—"the mayor, the police commissioner, the deputy police commissioners, the heads of the federal agencies, religious and ethnic leaders," di Taranto recalled. Within six months, O'Neill had met everyone on the list.

"Everybody knew John," R. P. Eddy, who left Washington in 1999 for a job at the United Nations, told me. "You would walk into Elaine's or Bruno's with him, and everyone from the owner to the waiters to the guy who cleaned the floor would look up. And the amazing thing is they would all have a private discussion with him at some point. The waitress wanted tickets to a Michael Jackson concert. One of the wait staff was applying for a job with the bureau, and John would be helping him with that. After a night of this, I remember saying, 'John, you've got this town wired.' And he said, 'What's the point of being sheriff if you can't act like one?' "

O'Neill was soon on intimate terms with movie stars, politicians, and journalists—what some of his detractors called "the Elaine's crowd." In the spring of 1998, one of O'Neill's New York friends, a producer at ABC News named Christopher Isham, arranged an interview for a network reporter, John Miller, with Osama bin Laden. Miller's narration contained information to the effect that one of bin Laden's aides was coöperating with the F.B.I. The leak of that detail created, in Isham's words, "a firestorm in the bureau." O'Neill, because of his friendship with Isham and Miller, was suspected of providing the information, and an internal investigation was launched. The matter died down after the newsmen denied that O'Neill was their informant and volunteered to take polygraphs.

In New York, O'Neill created a special Al Qaeda desk, and when the bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania occurred, in August, 1998, he was sure that bin Laden was behind them. "He was pissed, he was beside himself," Robert M. Blitzer, who was head of the F.B.I.'s domestic-terrorism section at the time, remembered. "He was calling me every day. He wanted control of that investigation." O'Neill persuaded Freeh to let the New York office handle the case, and he eventually dispatched nearly five hundred investigators to Africa. Mary Jo White, whose prosecuting team subsequently convicted five defendants in the case, told me, "John O'Neill, in the investigation of the bombings of our embassies in East Africa, created the template for successful investigations of international terrorism around the world."

The counter-terrorist community was stunned by the level of coördination required to pull off the simultaneous bombings. Even more troubling was the escalation of violence against civilians. According to Steven Simon, then a terrorist expert at the N.S.C., as many as five American embassies had been targeted—luck and better intelligence had saved the others. It was discouraging to learn that, nearly a year before, a member of Al Qaeda had walked into the American Embassy in Nairobi and told the C.I.A. of the bombing plot. The agency had dismissed this intelligence as unreliable. "The guy was a bullshit artist, completely off the map," an intelligence source said. But his warnings about the impending attacks proved accurate.

Moreover, key members of the Al Qaeda cell that planned the operation had been living in one of the most difficult places in the Western world to gain intelligence: the United States. The F.B.I. is constrained from spying on American citizens and visitors without probable cause. Lacking evidence that potential conspirators were actively committing a crime, the bureau could do little to gather information on the domestic front. O'Neill felt that his hands were tied. "John was never satisfied," one of his friends in the bureau recalled. "He said we were fighting a war, but we were not able to fight back. He thought we never had the tools in place to do the job."

O'Neill never presumed that killing bin Laden alone would be sufficient. In speeches, he identified five tools to combat terrorism: diplomacy, military action, covert operations, economic sanctions, and law enforcement. So far, the tool that had worked most effectively against Al Qaeda was the last one—the slow, difficult work of gathering evidence, getting indictments, hunting down the perpetrators, and gaining convictions.

O'Neill was worried that terrorists had established a beachhead in America. In a June, 1997, speech in Chicago, he warned, "Almost all of the groups today, if they chose to, have the ability to strike us here in the United States." He was particularly concerned that, as the millennium approached, Al Qaeda would seize the moment to dramatize its war with America. The intelligence to support that hypothesis was frustratingly absent, however.

On December 14, 1999, a border guard in Port Angeles, Washington, stopped an Algerian man, Ahmed Ressam, who then bolted from his car. He was captured as he tried to hijack another automobile. In the trunk of his car were four timers, more than a hundred pounds of urea, and fourteen pounds of sulfate—the makings of an Oklahoma City-type bomb. It turned out that Ressam's target was Los Angeles International Airport. The following day, Jordanian authorities arrested thirteen suspected terrorists who were believed to be planning to blow up a Radisson Hotel in Amman and a number of tourist sites frequented by Westerners. The Jordanians also discovered an Al Qaeda training manual on CD-ROM.

What followed was, according to Clarke, the most comprehensive investigation ever conducted before September 11th. O'Neill's job was to supervise the operation in New York. Authorities had found several phone numbers on Ressam when he was arrested. There was also a name, Ghani, which belonged to Abdel Ghani Meskini, an Algerian, who lived in Brooklyn and who had travelled to Seattle to meet with Ressam. O'Neill oversaw the stakeout of Meskini's residence and spent much of his time in the Brooklyn command post. "I doubt he slept the whole month," David N. Kelley, an assistant United States Attorney and chief of organized crime and terrorism for the Southern District, recalled. A wiretap picked up a call that Meskini had made to Algeria in which he spoke about Ressam and a suspected terrorist in Montreal. On December 30th, O'Neill arrested Meskini on conspiracy charges and a number of other suspected terrorists on immigration violations. (Meskini and Ressam eventually became coöperating witnesses and are both assisting the F.B.I.'s investigation of the September 11th attacks.)

O'Neill was proud of the efforts of the F.B.I. and the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force to avert catastrophe. On New Year's Eve, he and his friend Joseph Dunne, then the Chief of Department for the New York City Police, went to Times Square, which they believed was a highly likely target. At midnight, O'Neill called friends at SIOC and boasted that he was standing directly under the giant crystal ball.

After the millennium roundup, O'Neill suspected that Al Qaeda had sleeper cells buried in America. "He started pulling the strings in Jordan and in Canada, and in the end they all led back to the United States," Clarke said. "There was a general disbelief in the F.B.I. that Al Qaeda had much of a presence here. It just hadn't sunk through to the organization, beyond O'Neill and Dale Watson"—the assistant director of the counter-terrorism division. Clarke's discussions with O'Neill and Watson over the next few months led to a strategic plan called the Millennium After-Action Review, which specified a number of policy changes designed to root out Al Qaeda cells in the United States. They included increasing the number of Joint Terrorism Task Forces around the country; assigning more agents from the Internal Revenue Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to monitor the flow of money and personnel; and creating a streamlined process for analyzing information obtained from wiretaps.

Many in the F.B.I. point to the millennium investigation as one of the bureau's great recent successes. A year earlier, O'Neill had been passed over when the position of assistant director in charge of national security became available. When the post of chief of the New York office opened up, in early 2000, O'Neill lobbied fiercely for it. The job went to Barry Mawn, a former special agent in charge of the Boston office. As it happened, the two men met at a seminar just after the decision was announced. "I got a knock on the door, and there was John holding two beers," Mawn recalled. O'Neill promised complete loyalty in return for Mawn's support of his work on counter-terrorism. "It turns out that supporting him was a full-time job," Mawn said.

O'Neill had many detractors and very few defenders left in Washington. Despite occasional disagreements, Louis Freeh had always supported O'Neill, but Freeh had announced that he would retire in June, 2001. A friend of O'Neill's, Jerry Hauer, of the New York-based security firm Kroll, told me that Thomas Pickard, who had become the bureau's deputy director in 1999, was "an institutional roadblock." Hauer added, "It was very clear to John that Pickard was never going to let him get promoted." Others felt that O'Neill was his own worst enemy. "He was always trying to leverage himself to the next job," Dale Watson said. John Lipka, who considers himself a close friend of O'Neill, attributes some of O'Neill's problems to his flamboyant image. "The bureau doesn't like high-profile people," he said. "It's a very conservative culture."

The World Trade Center had become a symbol of America's success in fighting terrorism, and in September, 2000, the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force celebrated its twentieth anniversary in the Windows on the World restaurant. The event was attended by representatives of seventeen law-enforcement agencies, including agents from the F.B.I. and the C.I.A., New York City and Port Authority policemen, United States marshals, and members of the Secret Service. Mary Jo White praised the task force for a "close to absolutely perfect record of successful investigations and convictions." White had served eight years as the United States Attorney for the Southern District, and she had convicted twenty-five Islamic terrorists, including Yousef, six other World Trade Center bombers, the blind cleric Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, and nine of Rahman's followers, who had planned to blow up the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, the United Nations headquarters, and the F.B.I. offices.

O'Neill seemed at ease that night. Few of his colleagues knew of a troubling incident that had occurred two months earlier at an F.B.I. pre-retirement conference in Orlando. During a meeting, O'Neill had been paged. He left the room to return the call, and when he came back, a few minutes later, the other agents had broken for lunch. His briefcase, which contained classified material, was missing. O'Neill immediately called the local police, and they found the briefcase a couple of hours later, in another hotel. A Montblanc pen had been stolen, along with a silver cigar cutter and a lighter. The papers were intact; fingerprint analysis soon established that they had not been touched.

"He phoned me and said, 'I gotta tell you something,' " Barry Mawn recalled. O'Neill told Mawn that the briefcase contained some classified E-mails and one highly sensitive document, the Annual Field Office Report, which is an overview of every counter-terrorist and counter-espionage case in New York. Mawn reported the incident to Neil Gallagher, the bureau's assistant director in charge of national security. "John understood the seriousness of what he had done, and if he were alive today he'd tell you he made a stupid mistake," Gallagher told me. Even though none of the information had been compromised, the Justice Department ordered a criminal inquiry.

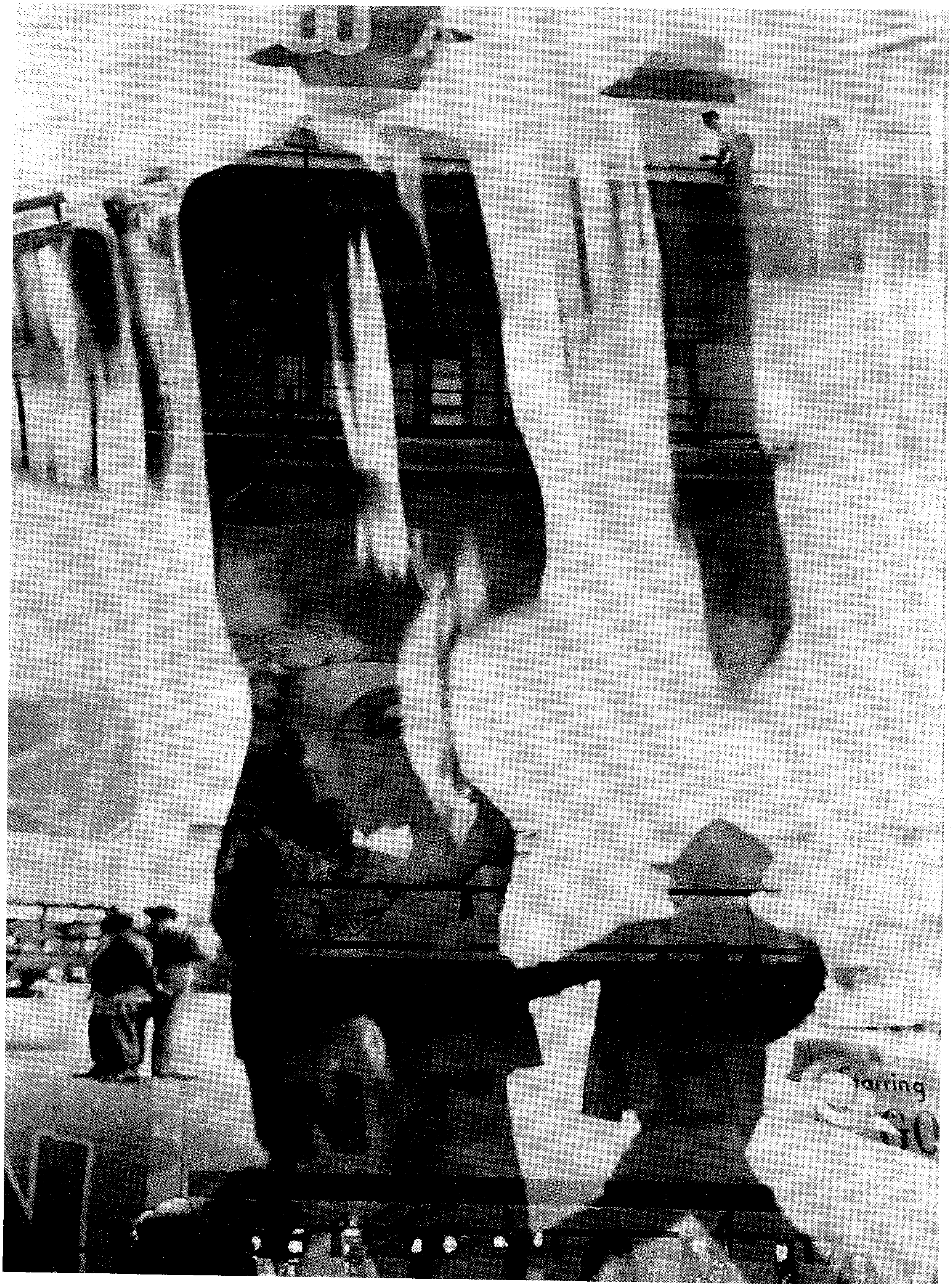
Mawn said that, as O'Neill's supervisor, he would have recommended an oral reprimand or, at worst, a letter of censure. Despite their competition for the top job in New York, Mawn had become one of O'Neill's staunchest defenders. "He demanded perfection, which was a large part of why the New York office is so terrific," Mawn said. "But underneath his manner, deep down, he was very insecure."

On October 12, 2000, a small boat filled with C4 explosives motored alongside a U.S. destroyer, the Cole, which was fuelling up off the coast of Yemen. Two men aboard the small craft waved at the larger vessel, then blew themselves to pieces. Seventeen American sailors died, and thirty-nine others were seriously wounded.

O'Neill knew that Yemen was going to be an extremely difficult place in which to conduct an investigation. In 1992, bin Laden's network had bombed a hotel in Aden, hoping to kill a number of American soldiers. The country was filled with spies and with jihadis and was reeling from a 1994 civil war. "Yemen is a country of eighteen million citizens and 50 million machine guns," O'Neill reported. On the day the investigators arrived in Yemen, O'Neill warned them, "This may be the most hostile environment the F.B.I. has ever operated in."

The American Ambassador to Yemen, Barbara Bodine, saw things differently. In her eyes, Yemen was the poor and guileless cousin of the swaggering petro-monarchies of the Persian Gulf. Unlike other countries in the region, it was a constitutional democracy—however

FROM "LOUIS FAURER"/MERRELL PUBLISHERS (2002)



SHOWCASE *The Philly native Louis Faurer (1916–2001), subject of a retrospective at Houston's Museum of Fine Arts, hit his stride in postwar New York. "I photographed almost daily," he said. "And the hypnotic dusk light led me to Times Square."*

fragile—in which women were allowed to vote. Bodine had had extensive experience in Arab countries. During the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait, she had been the deputy chief of mission in Kuwait City, and she had stayed through the hundred-and-thirty-seven-day siege of the American Embassy by Iraqi troops until all the Americans were evacuated.

Bodine, who is on assignment from the State Department as diplomat-in-residence at the University of California at Santa Barbara, contends that she and O'Neill had agreed that he would bring in a team of no more than fifty. She was furious when three hundred investigators, support staff, and marines arrived, many carrying automatic weapons. "Try to imagine if a military plane from another country landed in Des Moines, and three hundred heavily armed people took over," she told me recently. Bodine recalled that she pleaded with O'Neill to consider the delicate diplomatic environment he was entering. She quoted him as responding, "We don't care about the environment. We're just here to investigate a crime."

"There was the F.B.I. way, and that was it," she said to me. "O'Neill wasn't unique. He was simply extreme." According to Michael Sheehan, who was the State Department's coördinator for counter-terrorism at the time, such conflicts between ambassadors and the bureau are not unusual, given their differing perspectives; however, Bodine had been given clear instructions from the outset of the investigation. "I drafted a cable under [then Secretary of State] Madeleine Albright's signature saying that there were three guiding principles," Sheehan said. "The highest priorities were the immediate safety of American personnel and the investigation of the attack. No. 3 was maintaining a relationship with the government of Yemen— but only to support those objectives."

O'Neill's investigators were billeted three or four to a room in an Aden hotel. "Forty-five F.B.I. personnel slept on mats on the ballroom floor," he later reported. He set up a command post on the eighth floor, which was surrounded by sandbags and protected by a company of fifty marines.

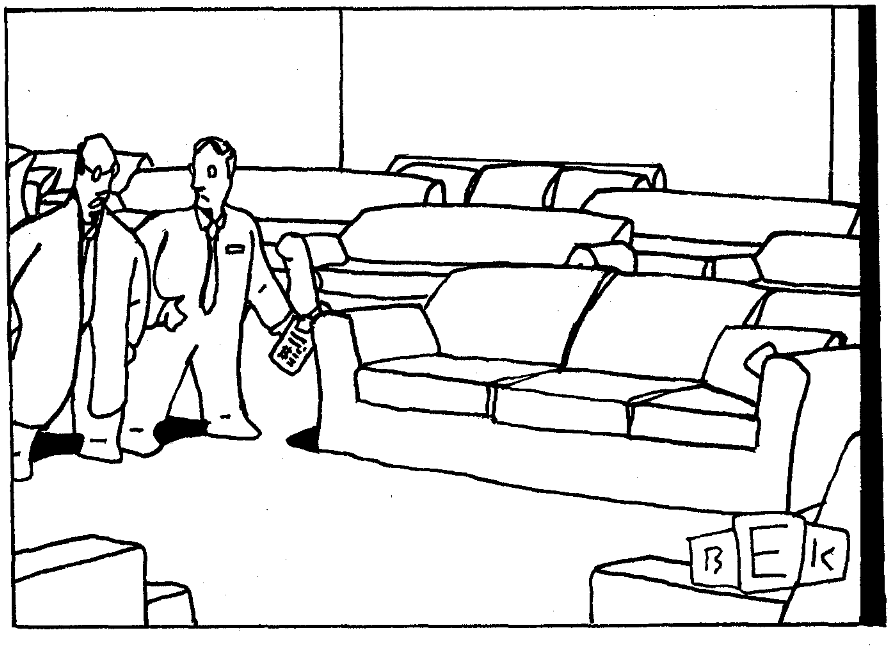
O'Neill spent much of his time coaxing the Yemeni authorities to coöperate. To build a case that would hold up in American courts, he wanted his agents present during interrogations by local authorities, in part to insure that none of the suspects were tortured. He also wanted to gather eyewitness testimony from residents who had seen the explosion. Both the Yemeni authorities and Bodine resisted these requests. "You want a bunch of six-foot-two Irish-Americans to go door-to-door?" Bodine remembers saying to O'Neill. "And, excuse me, but how many of your guys speak Arabic?"

There were only half a dozen Arabic speakers in the F.B.I. contingent, and even O'Neill acknowledged that their competence was sometimes in question. On one occasion, he complained to a Yemeni intelligence officer, "Getting information out of you is like pulling teeth." When his comment was translated, the Yemeni's eyes widened. The translator had told him, "If you don't give me the information I want, I'm going to pull out your teeth."

When O'Neill expressed his frustration to Washington, President Clinton sent a note to President Ali Abdullah Saleh. It had little effect. According to agents on the scene, O'Neill's people were never given the authority they needed for a proper investigation. Much of their time was spent on board the Cole, interviewing sailors, or lounging around the sweltering hotel. Some of O'Neill's requests for evidence mystified the Yemenis. They couldn't understand, for instance, why he was demanding a hat worn by one of the conspirators, which O'Neill wanted to examine for DNA evidence. Even the harbor sludge, which contained residue from the bomb, was off limits until the bureau paid the Yemeni government a million dollars to dredge it.

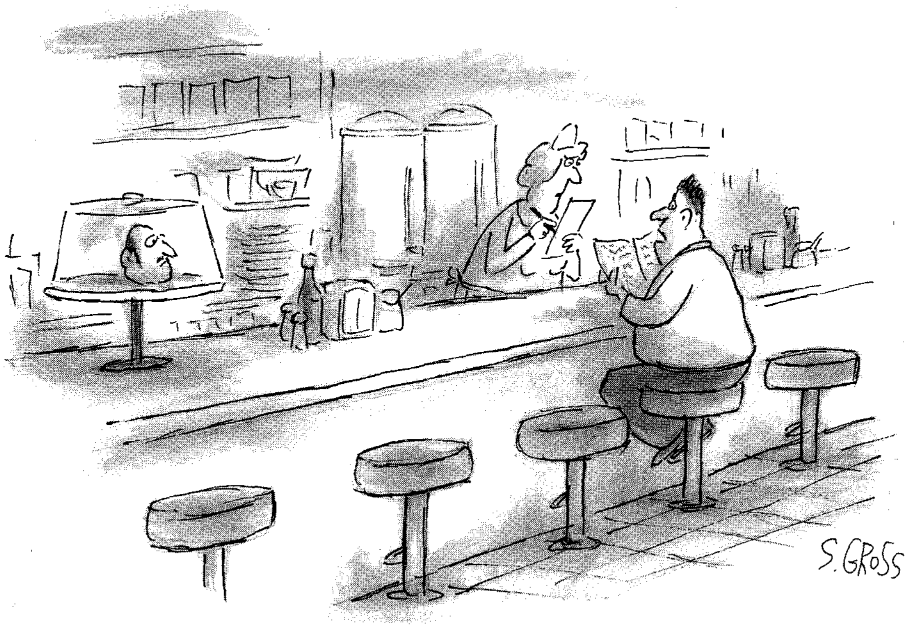
There were so many perceived threats that the agents often slept in their clothes and with their guns at their sides. Bodine thought that much of this fear was overblown. "They were deeply suspicious of everyone, including the hotel staff," she told me. She assured O'Neill that gunfire outside the hotel was probably not directed at the investigators but was simply the noise of wedding celebrations. Still, she added that, for the investigators' own safety, she wanted to lower the bureau's profile by reducing the number of agents and stripping them of heavy weapons. Upon receiving a bomb threat, the investigators evacuated the hotel and moved to an American vessel, the U.S.S. Duluth. After that, they had to request permission just to come ashore.

Relations between Bodine and O'Neill deteriorated to the point that Barry Mawn flew to Yemen to assess the situ-



"I like it—I'm just not sure it's what I want to rot on."

ation. “She represented that John was insulting, and not getting along well with the Yemenis,” he recalled. Mawn talked to members of the F.B.I. team and American military officers, and he observed O’Neill’s interactions with Yemeni authorities. He told O’Neill that he was doing “an outstanding job.” On Mawn’s return, he reported favorably on O’Neill to Freeh, adding that Bodine was his “only detractor.”



“Bring me the head of Alfredo Garcia and a cup of coffee.”

An ambassador, however, has authority over which Americans are allowed to stay in a foreign country. A month after the investigation began, Assistant Director Dale Watson told the Washington *Post*, “Sustained cooperation” with the Yemenis “has enabled the F.B.I. to further reduce its in-country presence. . . . The F.B.I. will soon be able to bring home the F.B.I.’s senior on-scene commander, John O’Neill.” It appeared to be a very public surrender. The same day, the Yemeni Prime Minister told the *Post* that no link had been discovered between the Cole bombers and Al Qaeda.

The statement was premature, to say the least. In fact, it is possible that some of the planning for the Cole bombing and the September 11th attacks took place simultaneously. It is now believed that at least two of the suspected conspirators in the Cole bombing had attended a meeting of alleged bin Laden associates in Malaysia, in January, 2000. Under C.I.A. pressure, Malaysian authorities had conducted a surveillance of the gathering, turning up a number of faces but, in the absence of wiretaps, nothing of what was said. “It didn’t seem like much at the time,” a Clinton Administration official told me. “None of the faces showed up in our own files.” Early last year, the F.B.I. targeted the men who were present at the Malaysia meeting as potential terrorists. Two of them were subsequently identified as hijackers in the September 11th attacks.

After two months in Yemen, O’Neill came home feeling that he was fighting the counter-terrorism battle without support from his own government. He had made some progress in gaining access to evidence, but so far the investigation had been a failure. Concerned about continuing threats against the remaining F.B.I. investigators, he tried to return in January of 2001. Bodine denied his application to reënter the country. She refuses to discuss that decision. “Too much is being made of John O’Neill’s being in Yemen or not,” she told me. “John O’Neill did not discover Al Qaeda. He did not discover Osama bin Laden. So the idea that John or his people or the F.B.I. were somehow barred from doing their job is insulting to the U.S. government, which was working on Al Qaeda before John ever showed up. This is all my embassy did for ten months. The fact that not every single thing John O’Neill asked for was appropriate or possible does not mean that we did not support the investigation.”

After O’Neill’s departure, the remaining agents, feeling increasingly vulnerable, retreated to the American Embassy in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen. In June, the Yemeni authorities arrested eight men who they said were part of a plot to blow up the Embassy. New threats against the F.B.I. followed, and Freeh, acting upon O’Neill’s recommendation, withdrew the team entirely. Its members were, he told me, “the highest target during this period.” Bodine calls the pullout “unconscionable.” In her opinion, there was never a specific, credible threat against the bureau. The American Embassy, Bodine points out, stayed open. But within days American military forces in the Middle East were put on top alert.

Few people in the bureau knew that O’Neill had a wife and two children (John, Jr., and his younger sister, Carol) in New Jersey, who did not join him when he moved to Chicago, in 1991. In his New York office, the most prominent pictures were not family photographs but French Impressionist prints. On his coffee table was a book about tulips, and his office was always filled with flowers. He was a terrific dancer, and he boasted that he had been on “American Bandstand” when he was a teen-ager. Some women found him irresistibly sexy. Others thought him a cad.

Shortly after he arrived in Chicago, O’Neill met Valerie James, a fashion sales director, who was divorced and was raising two children. Four years later, when he transferred to headquarters, in Washington, he also began seeing Anna DiBattista, who worked for a travel agency. Then, when he moved to New York, Valerie James joined him. In 1999, DiBattista moved to New York to take a new job, complicating his life considerably. His friends in Chicago and New York knew Valerie, and his friends in Washington knew Anna. If his friends happened to see him in the company of the "wrong" woman, he pledged them to secrecy.

On holidays, O'Neill went home to New Jersey to visit his parents and to see his children. Only John P. O'Neill, Jr., who is a computer expert for the credit-card company M.B.N.A., in Wilmington, Delaware, agreed to speak to me about his father. His remarks were guarded. He described a close relationship—"We talked a few times a week"—but there are parts of his father's past that he refuses to discuss. "My father liked to keep his private life private," he said.

Both James and DiBattista remember how O'Neill would beg for forgiveness and then promise better times. James told me, "He'd say, 'I just want to be loved, just love me,' but you couldn't really trust him, so he never got the love he asked for."

The stress of O'Neill's tangled personal life began to affect his professional behavior. One night, he left his Palm Pilot in Yankee Stadium; it was filled with his police contacts all around the world. On another occasion, he left his cell phone in a cab. In the summer of 1999, he and James were driving to the Jersey shore when his Buick broke down near the Meadowlands. As it happened, his bureau car was parked nearby, at a secret office location, and O'Neill switched cars. One of the most frequently violated rules in the bureau is the use of an official vehicle for personal reasons, and O'Neill's infraction might have been overlooked had he not let James enter the building to use the bathroom. "I had no idea what it was," she told me. Still, when the F.B.I. learned about the violation, apparently from an agent who had been caught using the site as an auto-repair shop, O'Neill was reprimanded and docked fifteen days' pay. He regarded the bureau's action as part of a pattern. "The last two years of his life, he got very paranoid," James told me. "He was convinced there were people out to get him."

THE EARLY HOURS

The early hours of morning: you still aren't writing
(rather, you aren't even trying), you just read lazily.
Everything is idle, quiet, full, as if
it were a gift from the muse of sluggishness,

just as earlier, in childhood, on vacation, when a colored
map was slowly scrutinized before a trip, a map
promising so much, deep ponds in the forest
like glittering butterfly eyes, mountain meadows drowning in sharp grass;

or the moment before sleep, when no dreams have appeared,
but they whisper their approach from all parts of the world,
their march, their pilgrimage, their vigil at the sickbed
(grown sick of wakefulness), and the quickening among medieval figures

compressed in endless stasis over the cathedral:
the early hours of morning, silence—
you still aren't writing,
you still understand so much.
Joy is close.

—*Adam Zagajewski*

(*Translated, from the Polish, by Clare Cavanagh.*)

In March, 2001, Richard Clarke asked the national-security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, for a job change; he wanted to concentrate on computer security. "I was told, 'You've got to recommend somebody similar to be your replacement,' " Clarke recalled. "I said, 'Well, there's only one person who would fit that bill.' " For months, Clarke tried to persuade O'Neill to become a candidate as his successor.

O'Neill had always harbored two aspirations—to become a deputy director of the bureau in Washington or to take over the New York office. Freeh was retiring in June, so there were likely to be some vacancies at the top, but the investigation into the briefcase incident would likely block any promotion in the bureau. O'Neill viewed Clarke's job as, in many ways, a perfect fit for him. But he was financially pressed, and Clarke's job paid no more than he was making at the F.B.I. Throughout the summer, O'Neill refused to commit himself to Clarke's offer. He talked about it with a number of friends but became alarmed when he thought that headquarters might hear of it. "He called me in a worked-up state," Clarke recalled. "He said that people in the C.I.A. and elsewhere know you are considering recommending me for your job. You have to tell them it's not true." Clarke dutifully called a friend in the agency, even though O'Neill still wanted to be a candidate for the position.

In July, O'Neill heard of a job opening in the private sector which would pay more than twice his government salary—that of chief of security for the World Trade Center. Although the Justice Department dropped its inquiry into the briefcase incident, the bureau was conducting an internal investigation of its own. O'Neill was aware that the *Times* was preparing a story about the affair, and he learned that the reporters also knew about the incident in New Jersey involving James and had classified information that probably came from the bureau's investigative files. The leak seemed to be timed to destroy O'Neill's chance of being confirmed for the N.S.C. job. He decided to retire.

O'Neill suspected that the source of the information was either Tom Pickard or Dale Watson. The antagonism between him and Pickard was well known. "I've got a pretty good Irish temper and so did John," Pickard, who retired last November, told me. But he insisted that their differences were professional, not personal. The leak was "somebody being pretty vicious to John," but Pickard maintained that he did not do it. "I'd take a polygraph to it," he said. Watson told me, "If you're asking me who leaks F.B.I. information, I have no idea. I know I don't, and I know that Tom Pickard doesn't, and I know that the director doesn't." For all the talk about polygraphs, the bureau ruled out an investigation into the source of the leak, despite an official request by Barry Mawn, in New York.

Meanwhile, intelligence had been streaming in concerning a likely Al Qaeda attack. "It all came together in the third week in June," Clarke said. "The C.I.A.'s view was that a major terrorist attack was coming in the next several weeks." On July 5th, Clarke summoned all the domestic security agencies—the Federal Aviation Administration, the Coast Guard, Customs, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the F.B.I.—and told them to increase their security in light of an impending attack.

On August 19th, the *Times* ran an article about the briefcase incident and O'Neill's forthcoming retirement, which was to take place three days later. There was a little gathering for coffee as he packed up his office.

When O'Neill told ABC's Isham of his decision to work at the Trade Center, Isham had said jokingly, "At least they're not going to bomb it again." O'Neill had replied, "They'll probably try to finish the job." On the day he started at the Trade Center—August 23rd—the C.I.A. sent a cable to the F.B.I. saying that two suspected Al Qaeda terrorists were already in the country. The bureau tried to track them down, but the addresses they had given when they entered the country proved to be false, and the men were never located.

When he was growing up in Atlantic City, O'Neill was an altar boy at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church. On September 28th, a week after his body was found in the rubble of the World Trade Center, a thousand mourners gathered at St. Nicholas to say farewell. Many of them were agents and policemen and members of foreign intelligence services who had followed O'Neill into the war against terrorism long before it became a rallying cry for the nation. The hierarchy of the F.B.I. attended, including the now retired director Louis Freeh. Richard Clarke, who says that he had not shed a tear since September 11th, suddenly broke down when the bagpipes played and the casket passed by.

O'Neill's last weeks had been happy ones. The moment he left the F.B.I., his spirits had lifted. He talked about getting a new Mercedes to replace his old Buick. He told Anna that they could now afford to get married. On the last Saturday night of his life, he attended a wedding with Valerie, and they danced nearly every number. He told a friend within Valerie's hearing, "I'm gonna get her a ring."

On September 10th, O'Neill called Robert Tucker, a friend and security-company executive, and arranged to get together that evening to talk about security issues at the Trade Center. Tucker met O'Neill in the lobby of the north tower, and the two men rode the elevator up to O'Neill's new office, on the thirty-fourth floor. "He was incredibly proud of what he was doing," Tucker told me. Then they went to a bar at the top of the tower for a drink. Afterward, they headed uptown to Elaine's, where they were joined by their friend Jerry Hauer. Around midnight, the three men dropped in on the China Club, a night spot in midtown. "John made the statement that he thought something big was going to happen," Hauer recalled.

Valerie James waited up for O'Neill. He didn't come in until 2:30 A.M. "The next morning, I was frosty," she recalled. "He came into my bathroom and put his arms around me. He said, 'Please forgive me.' " He offered to drive her to work, and dropped her off at eight-thirteen in the flower district, where she had an appointment, and headed to the Trade Center.

At 8:46 A.M., when American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the north tower, John P. O'Neill, Jr., was on a train to New York, to install some computer equipment and visit his father's new office. From the window of the train he saw smoke coming from the Trade Center. He called his father on his cell phone. "He said he was O.K. He was on his way out to assess the damage," John, Jr., recalled.

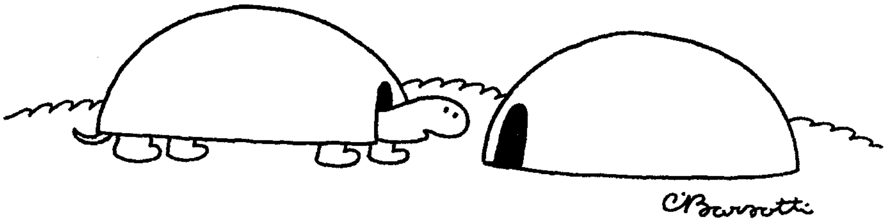
Valerie James was arranging flowers in her office when "the phones started ringing off the hook." A second airliner had just hit the south tower. "At nine-seventeen, John calls," James remembered. He said, "Honey, I want you to know I'm O.K. My God, Val, it's terrible. There are body parts everywhere. Are you crying?" he asked. She was. Then he said, "Val, I think my employers are dead. I can't lose this job."

"They're going to need you more than ever," she told him.

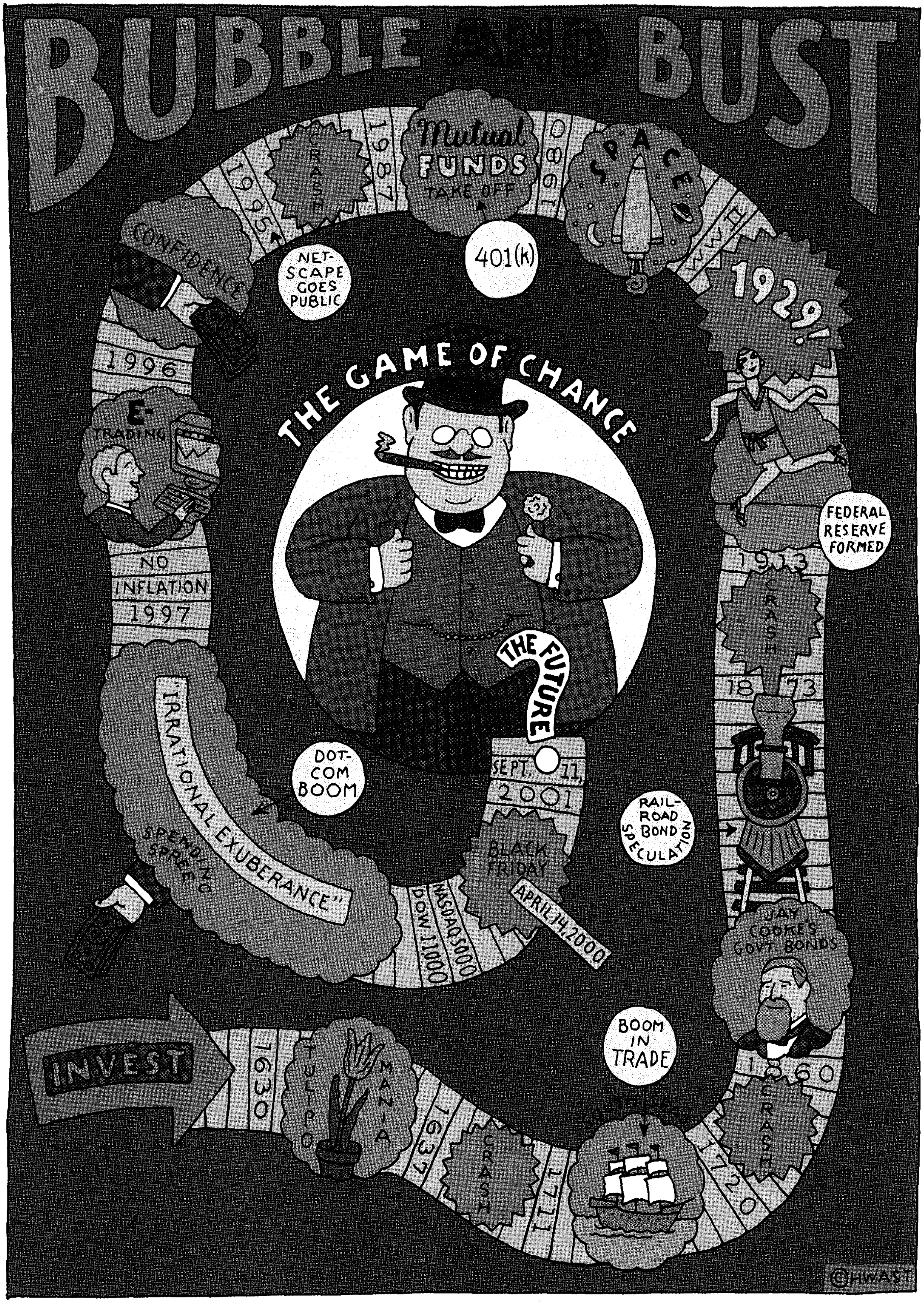
At nine-twenty-five, Anna DiBattista, who was driving to Philadelphia on business, received a call from O'Neill. "The connection was good at the beginning," she recalled. "He was safe and outside. He said he was O.K. I said, 'Are you sure you're out of the building?' He told me he loved me. I knew he was going to go back in."

Wesley Wong, an F.B.I. agent who had known O'Neill for more than twenty years, raced over to the north tower to help set up a command center. "John arrived on the scene," Wong recalled. "He asked me if there was any information I could divulge. I knew he was now basically an outsider. One of the questions he asked was 'Is it true the Pentagon has been hit?' I said, 'Gee, John, I don't know. Let me try to find out.' At one point, he was on his cell phone and he was having trouble with the reception and started walking away. I said, 'I'll catch up with you later.' "

Wong last saw O'Neill walking toward the tunnel leading to the second tower. ♦



"What if I told you that we have tickets to 'The Producers'?"


BUBBLE AND BUST
THE GAME OF CHANCE
THE FUTURE
INVEST
1630
TULIPO MANIA
1637
CRASH
1711
BOOM IN TRADE
1720
CRASH
1860
JAY COOKE'S GOVT. BONDS
RAIL-ROAD BOND SPECULATION
1873
CRASH
1913
FEDERAL RESERVE FORMED
1929!
WWII
SPACE
1980
Mutual FUNDS TAKE OFF
401(k)
1987
CRASH
1995
NET-SCAPE GOES PUBLIC
CONFIDENCE
1996
E-TRADING
NO INFLATION 1997
"IRRATIONAL EXUBERANCE"
SPENDING SPREE
DOT-COM BOOM
DOW 11,000
NASDAQ 5000
BLACK FRIDAY
APRIL 14, 2000
SEPT. 11, 2001
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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

STRIKING IT RICH

The rise and fall of popular capitalism.

BY JOHN CASSIDY

Thursday, August 12, 1982, didn't seem like a momentous day in American history. Events in the Middle East dominated the news. In Los Angeles, Henry Fonda died at seventy-seven after a long illness. In sports, the White Sox handed the Yankees their third straight loss. Wall Street was quiet. With the economy stuck in a slump, there was little interest in buying stocks. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell by 0.29 points, ending at 776.92. The Nasdaq fell by 0.93 points, to 159.84. Nobody realized it at the time, but when the closing bell rang at the New York Stock Exchange the last bear market of the twentieth century had ended. The following morning, the Federal Reserve, led by Paul Volcker, cut short-term interest rates by half a per cent in an effort to revive the economy. It was the third rate reduction in a month, and it worked. From then on, the stock market and the economy recovered in tandem. By the end of 1982, the Dow was trading above 1,000. The greatest bull market ever—one that would see the Dow rise more than tenfold and the Nasdaq rise almost thirtyfold—was under way.

Stock markets are like electricity and airplanes: extremely useful inventions that sometimes go haywire. They transfer resources from people with money to businesses that have projects they don't have enough money to finance. This may sound trivial but it isn't. Economic systems that have relied on other methods of mobilizing savings for investment, such as government fiat (the Soviet bloc) or the banking system (Germany), have run into problems. Stock markets also provide incentives for innovation and hard work. If an entrepreneur sets up a successful company, he or she can issue stock to investors in an I.P.O., a process known as "going public." The promise of striking it rich in the stock market gets a lot of people out of bed in the morning.

SEYMOUR CHWAST

The New York Stock and Exchange Board opened for business in 1817, but it wasn't until the eighteen-sixties that large-scale capital-raising began in America. During the Civil War, the banker Jay Cooke successfully organized the sale of five hundred million dollars' worth of federal government bonds, thereby demonstrating that Americans were willing to part with hard-earned cash for paper securities. In 1869, Cooke took over the Northern Pacific Railroad and tried to sell a hundred million dollars' worth of bonds to pay for further expansion. This proved impossible, and on Thursday, September 18, 1873—the first "Black Thursday"—Cooke's bank failed, just a day after he had President Ulysses S. Grant to dinner. Fear swept Wall Street, creditors rushed to withdraw their deposits, and several other banks collapsed. The New York Stock Exchange was forced to close down for ten days, and public faith in the financial markets was destroyed for a generation. Mark Twain captured the popular attitude in "Pudd'nhead Wilson" when he wrote, "October. This is one of the peculiarly dangerous months to speculate in stocks in. The others are July, January, September, April, November, May, March, June, December, August and February."

It wasn't until after the First World War that Americans returned to the stock market in large numbers. Following the invention of the Federal Reserve System, in 1913, many economists came to believe that the new science of monetary policy had rendered recessions obsolete. In 1927, *Barron's*, the financial weekly, hailed a "new era without depressions." (In September, 2000, the same publication would carry the front-page headline "CAN ANYTHING STOP THIS ECONOMY? DESPITE RECENT SIGNS OF A SLOWDOWN, EXPECT THE ECONOMY TO REMAIN ROBUST, WITH NO RECESSION IN SIGHT.") The mood of optimism spread to the stock market, and millions of people bought shares for the first time—only to be caught out in the stock-market crash of October, 1929. For a generation after 1929, the stock market reverted to being a province of the rich. Middle-class families kept their money in the bank, in real estate, or in other investments.

The reëmergence of popular capitalism at the end of the twentieth century was largely an accident. During the nineteen-seventies, a number of economists were concerned that Americans were saving too little for retirement, thereby putting the Social Security system under strain and depriving businesses of the funds needed for investment. To encourage thrift, Congress came up with a series of tax incentives for saving. In 1974, the first individual retirement accounts (I.R.A.s) were introduced, but the standards for qualification were strict, and they didn't really catch on. In the Tax Reform Act of 1978, legislators loosened things up a bit by allowing workers to contribute their cash bonuses to retirement savings accounts on a tax-deferred basis. The wording of this clause, No. 401(k), was vague, and it attracted the attention of R. Theodore Benna, an employee-benefits consultant in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

One Saturday afternoon in 1980, Benna, who was then thirty-nine years old, was helping one of his clients, a local bank, to redesign its employee pension plan when he had a thought. If cash bonuses could be sheltered from tax under clause 401(k), why couldn't regular income be sheltered in the same way? There didn't appear to be anything in the statute that specifically ruled it out. "My approach was that if the code doesn't say, 'Thou shalt not,' then thou should be able to," Benna, a devout Baptist, later recalled. He designed a retirement plan that would allow employees to contribute a portion of their paychecks to a savings account on a pretax basis. A few months later, Benna's own firm, the Johnson Companies, launched the first 401(k) plan. In November, 1981, the Internal Revenue Service gave Benna's creation its official blessing. With legal approval, the new savings plans spread rapidly, and by 1985 more than ten million employees had one.

Through their 401(k) plans, tens of millions of middle-class families were introduced to the stock market. In most cases, the initiation took place through mutual funds—investment companies that pool their shareholders' money and invest it in a range of financial assets. At the beginning of 1980, the total amount of money invested in stock and bond mutual funds was just forty-nine billion dollars. In 1995, Americans invested more than a hundred billion dollars in stock funds alone, and the figure went up from there. The growth of 401(k) plans and I.R.A.s transformed the mutual-fund industry and supported the bull market. Mutual funds poured money into the stock market, and the rise in stock prices drew more money into these funds. By the end of 2000, there was more money in mutual funds than there was in the banking system—about seven trillion dollars, of which about four trillion was in stock funds. New funds were being created every day. At the start of 2001, the number of mutual funds topped eight thousand, which meant that there were more mutual funds than there were stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq combined.

It is a curious fact of history that mass movements often invent their own vocabularies. The Jacobins did it during the French Revolution; the antiwar protesters did it during the nineteen-sixties; and so, too, did stock-market investors during the nineteen-eighties and nineties. Much of the jargon investors adopted dates from the nineteen-fifties and sixties, when economists like Harry Markowitz, a University of Chicago graduate, William Sharpe, of Stanford, and Paul Samuelson, of M.I.T., invented the field of financial economics. The economists of the postwar era looked at stock-market investing as a straightforward scientific problem: How could prospective returns be maximized for a given level of risk? Or, how could risk be minimized for a given level of desired returns? The solution that they came up with, after many pages of complicated math, was quite simple: invest in a diverse portfolio of stocks and bonds, then hold on to it for as long as possible. Some of the investments will fall and others will rise, but over the long term the investor will do a lot better than he would by leaving his money in the bank or by studying the newspaper and buying individual stocks on his own.

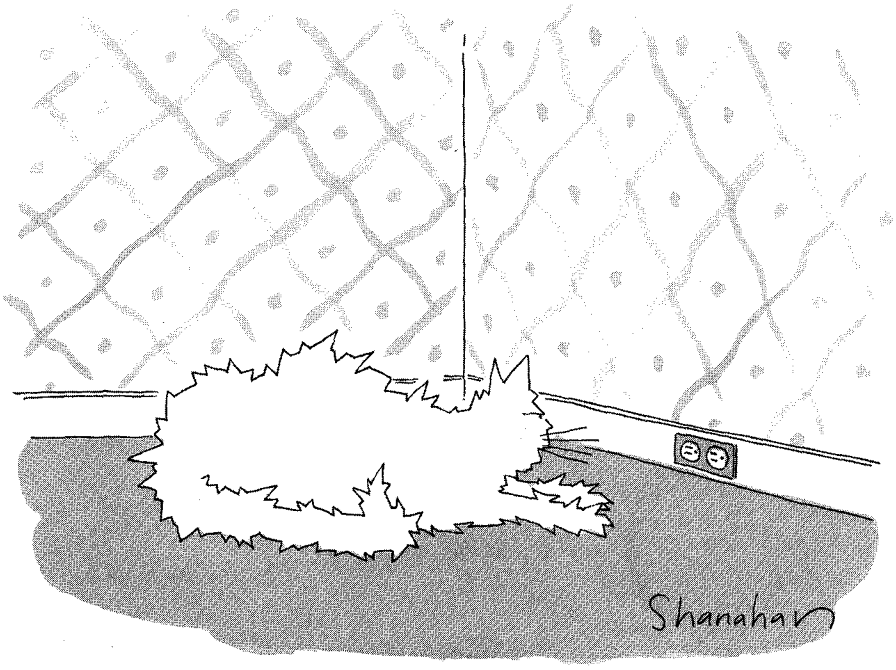
To mutual-fund managers, who made their living by providing investors with an easy way to buy stocks, this conclusion couldn't have been improved upon. The industry spent heavily to inform the public of the purported benefits of "risk management," "portfolio diversification," and "long-term investing." (Not surprisingly, the way to achieve these goals was to buy more mutual funds.) Academics and financial journalists also helped spread the message, as did magazines like *Money*, *SmartMoney*, and *Fortune*. Publishing investment guidebooks became a lucrative industry, although much of what these books said could be encapsulated in a short sentence: "Invest for the long term and spread your risk."

The crash in October, 1987, shook the public's growing faith in stock-market investing, but it didn't break it. Prices soon recovered, and confidence returned. In August, 1989, the Dow passed its 1987 peak. Ultimately, the message that many Americans took from October, 1987, was that the market always comes back, so selling in a downturn is a big mistake.

Jeremy Siegel, a professor of finance at the Wharton School, was the most influential proponent of the "buy and hold" mantra. In 1994, Siegel published a book entitled "Stocks for the Long Run," in which he argued that "stocks have been chronically undervalued throughout history." Since 1802, Siegel calculated, stocks had outperformed bonds in every single ten-year period. On the basis of this evidence, he claimed that it was always a good idea to buy stocks, regardless of how much prices had risen in recent years. Similarly, he argued, "there is no compelling reason for long-term investors to significantly reduce their stockholdings, no matter how high the market seems." Siegel demonstrated that even people who bought stocks on the eve of October, 1929, achieved decent returns if they held on to them long enough. This message was popular on Wall Street, and Siegel became something of a celebrity. At one point, he was even summoned to make a presentation to Alan Greenspan and his fellow-governors at the Fed.

It was in this context that the first Internet I.P.O.s took place. From railways to radio to space travel, new technologies have often been associated with speculative activity. The commercial exploitation of the World Wide Web fitted the historical pattern. On August 9, 1995, Netscape Communications issued five million shares at twenty-eight dollars each. Investors proved keen to buy a piece of the company that had invented the first commercial Web browser. At the end of the day, the stock stood at 58 1/4, and Netscape was worth $2.2 billion. "It was the best opening day for a stock in Wall Street history for an issue of its size," the *Times* reported the following morning. In the words of Jim Clark, Netscape's co-founder, "What the I.P.O. did was give anarchy credibility." During the next five years, more than four hundred Internet-related firms went public, and companies like Yahoo!, eBay, and Amazon.com became household names.

None of this could have happened without the development of a populist stock-market culture. Between the beginning of 1995 and the end of May, 1996, the Dow climbed from 3,837.10 to 5,693.40, an increase of more than forty-five per cent. Meanwhile, the Nasdaq rose by about sixty-five per cent, from 751.31 to 1,243.43. This rally sparked a fierce debate on Wall Street about whether a speculative bubble was emerging, and not just in Internet stocks but in the market at large. On one side were the traditionalists, who believed that stock prices had already risen well beyond levels that could be justified on the economic fundamentals. On the other side were the New Economy enthusiasts, who argued that the time-



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honored methods of valuing stocks no longer worked and should be discarded.

Two of the most prominent bears were Barton Biggs, the chairman of Morgan Stanley Asset Management, and Byron Wien, Morgan Stanley's chief United States investment strategist. In 1996, they were both sixty-three years old, with gray hair, lined faces, and fashion clocks that appeared to have stopped during the Eisenhower Presidency. In early 1996, Wien predicted a thousand-point decline in the Dow, and Biggs advised investors to lighten up on United States stocks. "You've got stocks selling at absolutely unbelievable multiples of earnings and revenues," Biggs told me in May, 1996. "You've got companies going public that don't even have any earnings. You've got people setting up Internet pages to reinforce each other's convictions in these highly speculative stocks. This is wild stuff out of the past. In every market where it has happened—from the U.S. to Japan to Malaysia to Hong Kong—it always ends in the same way."

Biggs got out a set of charts to support his case. They showed the history of stock prices relative to profits, dividends, accounting values, and several other factors. According to every one of the charts, valuations were higher now than they had been at any point since the nineteen-twenties. In several instances, they appeared to be higher than they were in 1929. "The sociological signs are very bad, too," Biggs continued. "Everybody's son wants to work for Morgan Stanley. Worthless brothers-in-law are starting hedge funds"—risky, unregulated investment funds. "I know a guy who is fifty and he's never done anything. He's starting a hedge fund."

Biggs and Wien worked at the same firm as the stock analyst Mary Meeker and the investment banker Frank Quattrone, two of the leading promoters of Internet stocks. In fact, Biggs, Wien, and Meeker often wrote for the same investment circular. In a typical issue, a reader might well find a doom-laden essay by Biggs or Wien and a buy recommendation from Meeker for Netscape or America Online.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, the environment was less liberal. One by one, most of the bears either changed their views or found themselves being shunted aside. Whenever the stock market took a tumble, as it did several times, it came back stronger than ever. Anybody who questioned the market's ascent was seen as hopelessly antiquated. Some of the most famous investors in the land found themselves cast into this category. In April, 1996, Warren Buffett, the "Sage of Omaha," issued a new class of stock in his company, Berkshire Hathaway. In a letter to shareholders, Buffett warned that neither he nor his longtime partner, Charlie Munger, "would buy shares" in Berkshire Hathaway at prevailing prices, "nor would they recommend that their families or friends do so."

Jeffrey Vinik, the manager of the biggest mutual fund in the country, Fidelity's Magellan Fund, was another stock-market skeptic. At the end of 1995, he became concerned by what he saw as "euphoria" among investors and shifted some money into bonds. In early 1996, the Magellan Fund's performance suffered compared with rival funds that had remained fully invested in the stock market. In May, Vinik announced that he was resigning from Fidelity. He insisted that he hadn't been fired, but the lesson that other fund managers took from Vinik's departure was unambiguous: taking money out of the stock market could be a career-ending mistake. "It sent a message that you had better be right or else your job is on the line," Barton Biggs commented. "He was early, and there's no difference between being early and being wrong." After Vinik's demise, other fund managers were understandably reluctant to buck the crowd. From their selfish perspective, it made much more sense to keep buying along with everybody else.

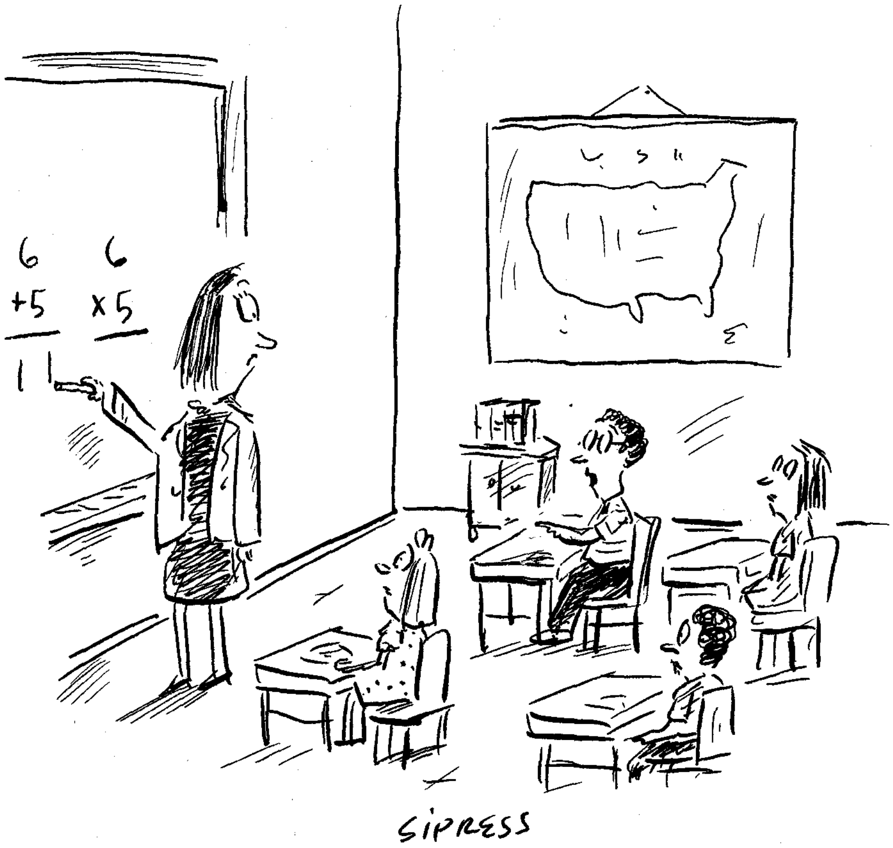
The idea that rational behavior on the part of individual investors can lead to an irrational outcome—a speculative bubble—dates at least to the "tulipmania" in Holland, during the sixteen-thirties, when speculators took over the tulip market, sending bulb prices soaring to impossible heights. The term "speculative bubble" dates from London, in 1720, after the South Sea Company had been granted a government monopoly on trade with the Spanish colonies in South America. In six months, the price of South Sea Company shares shot up more than eightfold, peaking in June of that year. A great wave of gambling in stocks took over London, and everybody from Alexander Pope to Isaac Newton and King George I got caught up in it. Enterprising men looked at the buoyant market and rushed to found new speculative vehicles, or "bubble companies," as they came to be known, some of which were clearly fraudulent. By September, the bubble had burst. Stock in the South Sea Company fell by more than seventy-five per cent, and many people, Newton among them, were ruined.

Most of those who were involved in the South Sea bubble knew that the promise of riches from the South Sea trade was a myth, but they saw the chance to make some quick money in the market and took it. In the memorable words of a London banker at the time, "When the rest of the world is mad, we must imitate them in some measure."

Once a bubble gets going, it feeds on itself, with rising prices drawing ever more people into the market. "A fad is a bubble if the contagion of the fad occurs through price; people are attracted by observed price increases," Robert Shiller, an economist at Yale, explained in his 1989 book "Market Volatility." He continued, "In the simplest bubble model, price increases themselves thus cause greater subsequent price increases until price reaches some barrier; then the bubble bursts and price drops precipitously, since there are then no further price increases to sustain the high demand."

Another critical element in the Internet stock bubble was the Internet itself, which created a virtual community of risktakers where none had existed before. In the past, the typical individual investor was a fellow sitting at his kitchen table with a copy of the *Wall Street Journal* and, perhaps, an annual report. If he wanted to discuss his portfolio, he would call his broker, who, assuming he was honest, would advise against dramatic gestures. In the Internet era, this picture was as outdated as black-and-white television. Armed with an account at E*Trade, Ameritrade, or any of the dozens of other online brokerages, the individual investor had the information, the technical capacity, and the moral support to become a professional speculator. A click of the mouse and he could display his portfolio. Another few clicks and he could buy and sell stocks, with electronic confirmation of his trades dispatched within seconds. Investors could place orders twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. They also had access to up-to-the-minute news, real-time stock quotes, and analysts' reports—the sort of information that used to be restricted to Wall Street professionals.

If an investor wanted to reassure himself about his investment strategy, or simply swap gossip about his trades, he could visit financial Web sites like the Motley Fool and Raging Bull, where he could exchange notes with thousands of like-minded souls. People read about Internet stocks on the Internet, talked about Internet stocks on the Internet, and bought Internet stocks on the Internet. By the summer of 1996, about eight hundred thousand Americans had online trading accounts, and the number was increasing daily. The technology at the center of the speculative boom helped to facilitate and sustain the speculation. The only historic parallel was the development of radio in the nineteen-twenties, which allowed people travelling on transatlantic liners to wire in their buy orders for RCA. In the Internet age, anyone with a computer and a modem could behave like a passenger on a luxury liner—at least for a while.



"When people say 'Do the math,' is this the kind of thing they're referring to?"

Responsibility for supervising the United States stock market is split between the S.E.C. and the Federal Reserve, the nation's central bank. The S.E.C. looks after the interests of individual investors, while the Fed oversees monetary policy and the behavior of financial institutions. The Fed is also supposed to play a broader role, insuring the health of the economy over all and preventing damaging speculative busts, which plague unregulated markets.

In 1996, Alan Greenspan had already been chairman of the Fed for nine years. Greenspan, who was seventy, was a venerable figure, widely credited with rescuing the economy after the 1987 stock-market crash and engineering the long period of non-inflationary growth during the nineteen-nineties. Greenspan and his colleagues on the Federal Open Market Committee, which meets eight times a year to set short-term interest rates, had the power to sink the stock market if they so wished. A couple of years before, in early 1994, when they raised rates for the first time in several years, the Dow, which had been climbing sharply, fell back. At the next meeting of the F.O.M.C., Greenspan congratulated his colleagues, saying, "I think we partially broke the back of an emerging speculation."

But in the summer of 1996 Greenspan was reluctant to repeat the trick. He was coming to believe that higher stock prices were justified by the economy's sterling performance. Some of his colleagues wanted to raise interest rates in order to slow down the economy, because they feared a resurgence of inflation, but Greenspan refused to go along with this argument. He believed that, thanks to the application of new technology, American firms and American workers were becoming a lot more productive, even if the official statistics were failing to pick up on this. If this was indeed the case, the economy would be able to grow a good deal faster than it had in the past without sparking inflation.

At an F.O.M.C. meeting in late September, Greenspan persuaded his colleagues to keep interest rates on hold. After the Fed's decision, the stock market resumed its upward climb. In October, the Dow raced past 6,000. A couple of months later—after Bill Clinton had been reëlected in a landslide—it reached 6,500. In just two years, the Dow had risen by nearly three thousand points. Many stocks had doubled in twelve months. Even if productivity growth had accelerated, this jump was difficult to justify on economic grounds. Inside the Fed, discussion about a possible speculative bubble increased.

Greenspan thought it was futile to try and distinguish between a bubble and a bull market based on sound economic fundamentals, except in retrospect, but he was open to argument. In early December, he hosted a seminar on the stock market at the Fed's headquarters, on C Street in Foggy Bottom. The attendees included Robert Shiller, a specialist in speculative manias, and his co-author, Harvard's John Campbell. They had brought charts to support their case that the stock market was grossly overvalued. Shiller also ran through some psychological evidence he had been collecting, which implied that crowd behavior had a lot to do with the market's rise. Greenspan seemed interested in Shiller's presentation but remained noncommittal.

A couple of days later, on December 5, 1996, Greenspan attended a reception at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington, where he delivered a long address entitled "The Challenge of Central Banking in a Democratic Society." Most of the speech was taken up with a historical discussion going back to Alexander Hamilton and William Jennings Bryan, but Greenspan also slipped in a brief reference to the current situation: "Clearly, sustained low inflation implies less uncertainty about the future, and lower risk premiums imply higher prices of stocks and other earning assets. . . . But how do we know when irrational exuberance has unduly escalated asset values, which then become subject to unexpected and prolonged contractions, as they have in Japan over the past decade? And how do we factor that assessment into monetary policy?"

Amid the economist's jargon, the phrase "irrational exuberance" stuck out prominently—as Greenspan had intended it to. Even before he got up to speak, the Reuters news agency had sent out a one-line alert based on an advance text: "Fed must be wary when irrational exuberance affects stocks, assets—Greenspan." When the New York Stock Exchange opened the next morning, the Dow slid a hundred and sixty points. Shiller was driving his child to school in New Haven when he heard the news about Greenspan's speech and its impact on the markets. "I wonder if I had anything to do with that," he said to himself.

Greenspan had issued what was, by his opaque standards, a clear warning to investors; but it didn't prove to be very effective. Later in the day, stock prices recovered, and the Dow closed down by just 55.16 points, a loss of less than one per cent. On Wall Street, after the initial shock, the Fed chairman's statement was interpreted as a sign of weakness. "Instead of raising rates, he is going to make speeches," Christopher Quick, a senior executive at the Quick & Reilly discount brokerage, remarked.

Wall Street had taken the measure of its man. Greenspan was concerned about the stock market, but not concerned enough to tighten monetary policy. A few weeks later, the Dow surged again. In early February, 1997, it topped 7,000, and it didn't stop there. In July, it broke 8,000. The Nasdaq, meanwhile, also rose sharply. In the six months from April 1, 1997, to October 1, 1997, it rose by almost forty per cent, to 1,690.30.

Every weekday in the late nineteen-nineties, from early morning, a steady stream of town cars made their way from lower Manhattan and midtown up the West Side Highway and across the George Washington Bridge. Once in New Jersey, the cars took the Fort Lee exit, hooked a couple of right turns, and deposited their passengers in front of a brick office building that is home to CNBC. With more than twelve hours of programming to fill each day, the CNBC producers couldn't be too picky about whom they put onscreen, but they did have some standards. Their ideal studio guest was a former beauty queen who covered technology stocks, spoke in short declarative sentences, and dated Donald Trump. Since there weren't many of these women available, the producers generally had to settle for middle-aged men who revered Alan Greenspan and tried their best to speak in English. The majority of CNBC's guests were bullish. Bears weren't banned, but they weren't exactly welcome, either. They tended to come off as crotchety, and viewers didn't like them.

NBC started CNBC in 1989, as a hedge against the declining ratings of the broadcast networks. The cable network, which was situated in New Jersey partly to make use of non-union labor, started life as the Consumer News and Business Channel, presenting a combination of shopping tips and financial advice. In 1991, NBC purchased the assets of the rival Financial News Network, which had recently gone bankrupt, and folded its assets into the renamed CNBC. FNN had been a pioneer in business television. It was founded in 1981 by Glen Taylor, a former minister and children's-television producer, and it started airing on three stations in California with a stock ticker running across the screen. FNN never made much money, but it managed to get distributed to thirty million homes, which is why CNBC bought its remains. Ron Insana, one of the CNBC anchors, would later call FNN's launch a "seminal moment" in the democratization of the financial markets, because "it was the first time you didn't have to call a broker to get a stock price."

After the merger, CNBC added a stock ticker and shifted its focus from consumer news to Wall Street. When the stock market took off in the mid-nineties, this strategy paid off. CNBC's audience wasn't very big—a couple of hundred thousand on an average day—but it was affluent enough to attract major advertisers. And, compared with other networks, CNBC's production costs were minimal; its reporters were paid much less than their NBC colleagues.

CNBC didn't create the stock-market boom, but it did perpetuate and amplify it. To borrow a term from biology, the network acted as a "propagation mechanism" for the investing epidemic. Across the country—in bars, banks, health clubs, airports, and doctors' waiting rooms—televisions were permanently turned to CNBC. The network treated the stock market as a sport, and there was never any doubt which side was the home team. Its daily schedule was set up like the coverage of an N.F.L. game. In the morning, there were pregame shows, detailing the latest team news (overnight corporate announcements, market activity in Europe and Asia) and focussing on key matchups ahead (economic statistics to be released, earnings announcements, important speeches). Throughout the trading day, there was live coverage, with a revolving cast of announcers and color commentators. And, after the market closed, a lengthy postgame show reviewed the day's action, concentrating on the big winners and losers.

On all but the darkest of days, CNBC maintained an upbeat tone. Its reporters were enthusiastic and well informed. It produced smart, entertaining television. What it didn't produce was objective news. Chief executives loved to go on CNBC. When they had good news to impart, they could deliver it directly; when they had bad news, they could sugarcoat it for investors. Either way, they were assured of a respectful hearing. To the town-car passengers, who were mostly analysts and fund managers, CNBC was a platform from which they could "talk their book"—pump the stocks that their firms owned. CNBC's reporters were more than content to let them do so. "A lot of financial journalists seem to hate capitalism," Joe Kernen, CNBC's stocks editor, who was himself a former stockbroker, complained to a reporter. "It would be like having sportscasters who hate sports. I love capitalism."

In the spring of 1998, when the Dow topped 9,000, two prominent British publications called on Alan Greenspan to bring the stock market back to earth before it crashed of its own accord. "America is experiencing a serious asset-price bubble," *The Economist* announced in an editorial. "The Fed needs to raise interest rates now. Uncertainty is no excuse for Mr. Greenspan to sit on his hands." Several days later, the *Financial Times* compared the United States' economy to Japan's in the nineteen-eighties, saying, "This is unquestionably a bubble." It is just conceivable that, if the American newspapers and magazines had taken up these arguments and pressured the Fed, Greenspan would have responded. In answer to the carping from London, however, the New York *Times* published an editorial defending the nation's economy. "America today is nothing like Japan eight years ago," it insisted. Economic downturns hadn't been abolished, the *Times* conceded, distancing itself from the more extreme New Economy enthusiasts, but "a recession that might start now would reflect the ordinary ups and downs of a complex economy, and not the inevitable implosion following speculative excess."

Newsweek also did its bit for national pride, reporting that Greenspan had privately poked fun at the *Economist* article. Few journalists questioned Greenspan's wisdom. This wasn't just a matter of hero worship, although there was some of that. Questioning the stock market's rise had already embarrassed many newspapers and magazines. In April, 1996, *Fortune* published a cover story, "How Crazy Is This Market?," which said that a "confidence-shattering crash" was inevitable at some point. In July, 1997, with the Dow up a further two thousand points, *Fortune* ran another alarmist cover story, this one posing the question "Time to Cash In Your Blue Chips?" Readers who sold out after either of these articles missed big run-ups in stock prices. Not surprisingly, *Fortune's* coverage of the stock market became notably less questioning as time went on—and this could be said of many publications. The truth was that few Americans wanted to read negative pieces about the stock market. Journalism, like all commodities, is subject to the laws of supply and demand. As the demand for skeptical reporting dropped, the supply fell back to match it.

In July, 1998, *Money* addressed the boom in stocks like Amazon.com, Yahoo!, and K-Tel. "Seeing such price gains, you may have two questions," the magazine noted. "One, is Internet mania based on nothing more than hype? And, two, is it too late to get in on the action?" The answers were reassuring—at least to Wall Street: "First, the Internet boom is for real," and "Second, you are not too late." A few weeks later, *Time*, which had been running boosterish articles about the Internet for years, surpassed itself with a cover picture of Jerry Yang, the co-founder of Yahoo!, above the headline "Kiss Your Mall Goodbye: Online Shopping Is Faster, Cheaper, and Better."

The most enthusiastic proponents of New Economy journalism were the technology and business magazines that sprang up in the wake of *Wired*, the glossy monthly that had styled itself as the vanguard of the digital revolution. In November, 1995, Alan Webber and William Taylor, two former editors at the *Harvard Business Review*, launched *Fast Company*, a monthly life-style magazine that propounded the pro-business but bomb-the-corporation ideology taught by management gurus such as Tom Peters. *Fast Company* turned Marxism on its head. In its view, workers, far from being oppressed, were being given a chance to express their individuality through their roles in the production process. The spring and summer of 1998 saw the appearance of *The Industry Standard*, a San Francisco-based title describing itself as the weekly "newsmagazine of the Internet economy," and *Business 2.0*, another glossy monthly. The editor-in-chief of *Business 2.0* called it the "oracle of the New Economy," but "courtier of the New Economy" would have been more accurate. The magazine set up an "advisory board" that included Amazon's Jeff Bezos; Halsey Minor, the founder of CNet; and Jeff Mallett, the chief operating officer of Yahoo!

The appearance of so many magazines devoted to the same subject was a classic sign of a speculative boom approaching its peak. In the eighteen-forties, during the mania for railways in Great Britain, the British historian Edward Chancellor points out, the railway press expanded to include fourteen new weekly papers and two new dailies. The list of railway titles included the *Railway World*, the *Railway Express*, the *Railway Examiner*, the *Railway Globe*, the *Rail-*

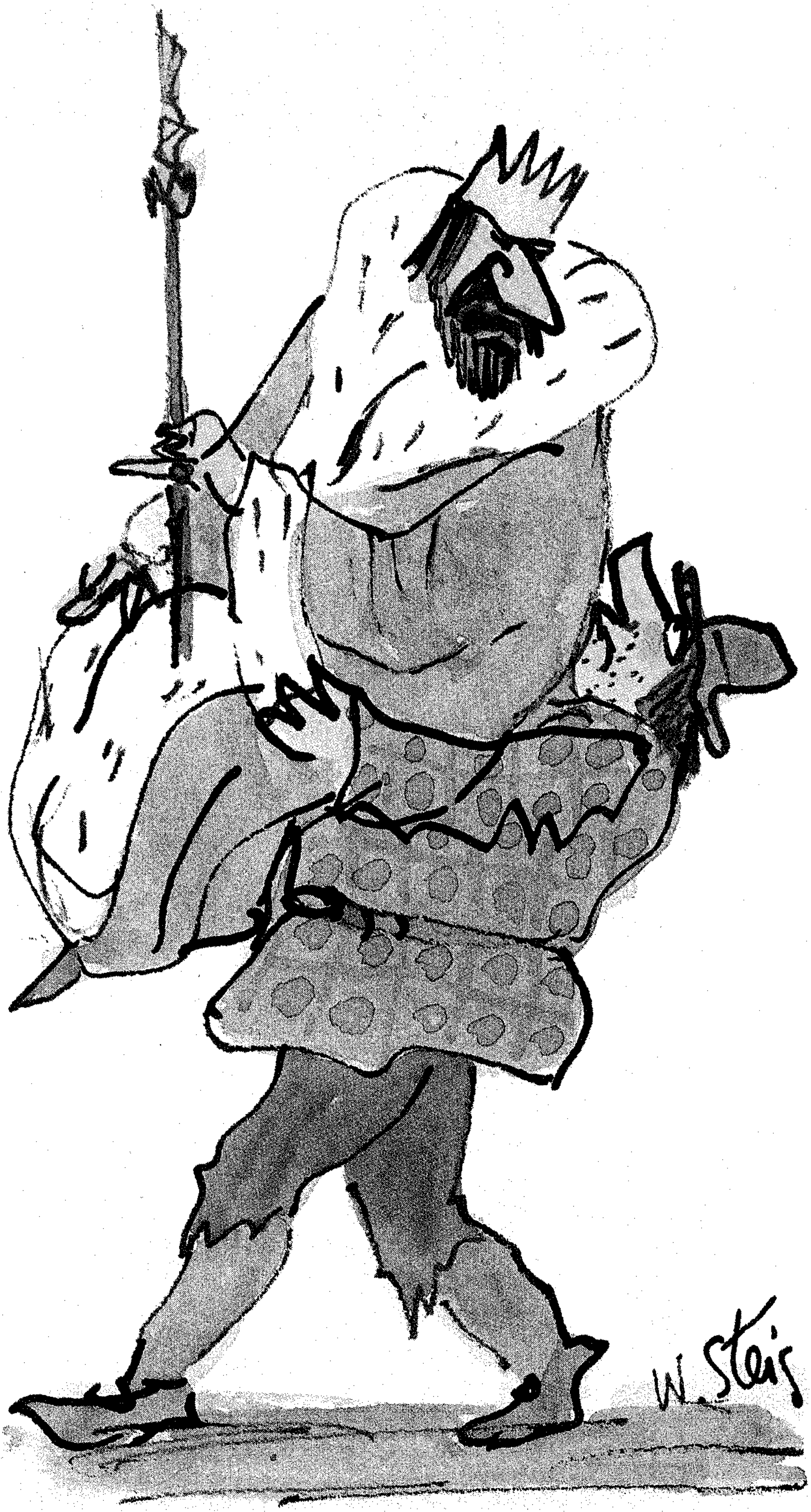
way Standard, the *Railway Mail*, the *Railway Engine*, the *Railway Telegraph*, the *Railway Register*, the *Railway Director*, and the *Railway Review*. After the financial crisis of 1847, many railway publications perished.

No. 50 Broad Street is an old-fashioned office building just around the corner from the New York Stock Exchange—the sort of place where each floor has several tenants, the elevator creaks, and the doorman gives you a tired look as you walk by. On a mild afternoon in the spring of 1999, just before the Dow broke 10,000, forty people were sitting in a conference room on the seventeenth floor. All but two of them were male. Through the open windows, the sound of traffic and sirens wafted in, making it difficult to hear the two men at the front of the room who were relating their experience as professional day-traders.

"As soon as I wake up in the morning, I turn on CNBC," Randy Guttenberg, a balding fellow with a goatee, who appeared to be in his early thirties, explained. "I look where the futures are. I listen to what they are talking about, what stocks are in play. And I look to see who the guests are going to be later in the day. Anytime I hear that somebody's coming on CNBC, I say to myself, 'What's going on?' Michael Dell doesn't speak bad news. Bill Gates doesn't speak bad news. Every time they speak, they have something good to say. So I buy the stocks." Guttenberg used to work at Lehman Brothers and Prudential-Bache Securities. For the past two years, he had rented a desk and a trading terminal at Broadway Trading, the company that had organized the lecture. "I used to trade two or three stocks at a time; now I have ten or twenty stocks on my screen," he went on. "My time frame in trading can be anything from ten seconds to half a day. Usually, it's in the five-to-twenty-minute range."

The other speaker was a beefy young man in a T-shirt and jeans named Brian Slomiak. He had left Charles Schwab, where he was "getting bored to crap," to become a day-trader. "To be honest, I got walloped for six or seven months," he said. "Then I started making some money. It's strictly a confidence game. It took time for me to have the confidence to trade a thousand stocks. Yahoo! still

SKETCHBOOK BY WILLIAM STEIG



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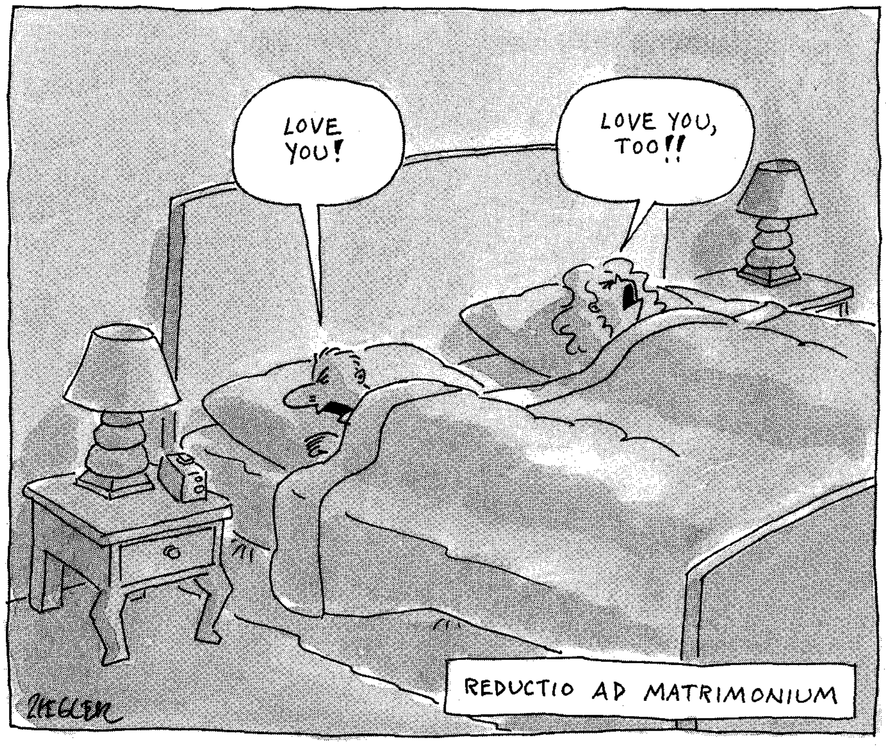
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scares the crap out of me, because it's so volatile. If I have some Yahoo!, I'm always thinking, How can I get out of it?" A few members of the audience laughed nervously. They had each paid fifteen hundred dollars for five days of coaching in the art of day trading.

Marc Friedfertig, who had founded Broadway Trading, in 1995, spoke next. A graduate of Columbia's business school, he became a futures trader and a member of the American Stock Exchange before recognizing the trading possibilities that deregulation and new technology had created. These went well beyond the services offered by firms like E*Trade and Charles Schwab. When a Schwab investor called up a stock quote on his computer, he saw the "bid" (the selling price) and the "ask" (the buying price). But these prices were only indicative. If the customer placed an order, he had to rely on Schwab to get the best price possible from the market-makers in that stock. With stocks like Yahoo! and Amazon.com, which gyrated wildly, the actual prices might bear little resemblance to the quoted prices.

Firms like Broadway Trading worked differently. Their computers linked traders directly to the Nasdaq market site and to several independent electronic exchanges that had sprung up in recent years, such as Island. For any given stock, the trader could see the exact number of shares that were being offered, plus the prices being requested, and the identity of the seller. By pressing a few buttons, he could either accept one of the offers or post his own offer on the screen for others to consider. For the first time in history, the ordinary investor really could trade alongside the professionals.

The goal of day trading, Friedfertig explained, was to dart in and out of the electronic marketplace, making a series of small profits. Buy at 50, sell at 50$\frac{1}{8}$. Buy at 50$\frac{1}{8}$, sell at 50$\frac{1}{4}$. And so on. The two keys to successful day trading were money management and timing. "The No. 1 reason that people lose is because they don't know how to control their losses," Friedfertig said. "If things are working, keep trading. If things are not working, slow down. You've gotta be like a great quarterback." If the market turned against them, day-traders should always close out their trades. "People who double up on their losses eventually get buried," Friedfertig concluded.

By early 1999, there were more than sixty day-trading firms, with almost three hundred offices across the country. According to the S.E.C., the number of people trading full time at day-trading firms was no more than seven thousand. But the amount of trading they did was enormous; day trading accounted for about fifteen per cent of the total trading volume on the Nasdaq. This was an overall figure. For some Internet stocks, such as America Online and Yahoo!, the percentage was much higher.

Some day-trading firms weren't as honest as Friedfertig about the risks their customers were taking. "If they follow the rules, they'll succeed," Sal Giamarese, a day-trading coach at an All-Tech Investment Group office in Falls Church, Virginia, insisted to the Washington *Post*. "It's just like golf. If you're careful about how you place your feet, how you lift the club and follow through, you'll stand a better chance of hitting the ball straight than hooking it." In a way, the analogy was accurate. Like most amateur golfers, the vast majority of day-traders did poorly. When the Massachusetts authorities investigated a day-trading firm in the state, they found that sixty-seven out of sixty-eight customers had lost money. Tales of disaster multiplied. A Chicago waiter with no trading experience blew a two-hundred-thousand-dollar inheritance. A Boston retiree went through two hundred and fifty thousand dollars of his wife's savings in a few hours. A California bank employee quit his job, borrowed forty thousand dollars on his credit cards to start trading, and promptly lost the lot.

Harvey Houtkin, the founder of All-Tech Investment Group, once referred to day trading as "the best entertainment since television," but there was nothing entertaining about gullible investors losing their life savings. According to the Electronic Traders Association's own figures, the average day-trader bought or sold six million shares a year. Assuming that he paid two cents a share to trade, which was common, he spent a hundred and twenty thousand dollars a year in commissions—more than many day-traders had in their accounts to begin with. Given these fees, the common perception that day trading was a relatively cheap business to operate was an illusion. Behind the marketing hype about personal empowerment, day trading was a business that any Wall Street old hand could appreciate: the customers risked their capital; the brokers made the profits.

The period between November, 1998, and March, 2000, was arguably the most remarkable in the history of American capitalism. In less than eighteen months, the Nasdaq went from below

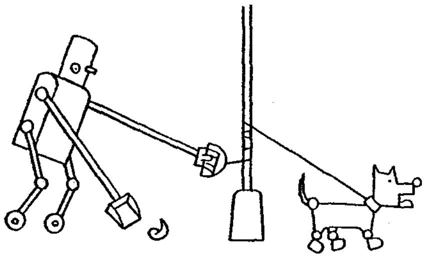
2,000 to above 5,000, Internet I.P.O.s became an everyday occurrence, and trillions of dollars of stock-market wealth were created, mostly in technology stocks. Meanwhile, the economy, which had been expanding for eight years, broke all previous records for non-inflationary growth.

Explaining how this could happen is not easy, but George Soros, one of the most successful investors of the modern era, has provided some clues. In his book "The Alchemy of Finance," which was published in 1987, Soros examined the reason that financial markets go to extremes. In a bull market, he explained, the very fact that stock prices are rising appears to improve the economic outlook, which prompts investors to become even more optimistic. This leads to more buying, and the market rises further, thus re-starting the cycle. Soros used the word "reflexivity" to describe this self-reinforcing process. With each oscillation of the cycle, investors' expectations for future profits and economic growth ratchet upward. Eventually, their expectations move so far out of line with reality that they become impossible to fulfill. At this point, the market becomes vulnerable to a correction. Disappointed expectations have a negative effect on stock prices, and falling stock prices make the economic fundamentals look worse. Unless more good news arrives quickly, reflexivity starts to work in the opposite direction.

Professional economists, who tend to see financial markets as omniscient calculating machines, gave Soros's book a cool reception, but he is a lot richer than they are. Certainly, his theory fits the Internet boom. The reflexive process was most powerful in the technology sector, which generated perhaps a third of all the growth in the economy between 1995 and 1999. Technology-systems manufacturers like Cisco Systems, Lucent Technologies, and Nortel Networks expanded at unprecedented rates. Among their biggest customers were upstart telecommunications companies, such as Qwest, Williams Communications, and 360networks, which owed their existence to the buoyant financial markets. Some of these firms were building national networks to challenge long-distance carriers like A.T. & T. and Sprint. Others were building local networks to compete against the Baby Bells. But they all depended on the financial markets to raise the vast sums of money needed to finance their expansion. In attempting to justify the prices that investors were paying for Cisco, Nortel, and other technology favorites, Wall Street analysts looked at their current growth rates and extrapolated them into the indefinite future. This valuation method conveniently ignored the fact that the growth rates were themselves a product of the stock market's rise. If the market faltered, they would almost certainly collapse.

Most technology investors didn't question the upbeat analysis that Wall Street was peddling. With a stock-market downturn unthinkable, there wasn't much point in worrying about the consequences should one arrive. In fairness, it is always hard to tell when the market has left reality so far behind that a downturn is imminent. In the summer of 1929, legend has it, Joseph P. Kennedy liquidated his portfolio after he saw shoeshine boys exchanging stock tips. If Kennedy had been alive in the nineteen-nineties, he would have sold out years before the peak. With confidence in the economy and the Internet practically unbounded, more and more Americans were willing to take the risk of staying in the market. Even Soros couldn't resist the temptation. In the summer of 1999, his funds poured billions of dollars into technology stocks.

On January 4, 2000, when President Clinton nominated Alan Greenspan for another four-year term of office, unemployment was at a thirty-year low, poverty was at a twenty-year low, and welfare rolls were at a thirty-two-year low. Paying tribute to the Fed chairman, the President said that Greenspan had been one of the first economists to recognize "the power and impact of new technologies on the New Economy, how they changed all the rules and all the possibilities." In fact, the President went on, Greenspan's "devotion to new technologies has been so significant, I've been thinking of taking Alan.com public; then we can pay the debt off even before 2015."



The joke was closer to the truth than the President might have imagined. Greenspan's policies had played a central role in the stock-market boom. The biggest danger to any bull market is the possibility that the central bank will raise interest rates sharply, stopping the economy in its tracks and decimating corporate earnings. Greenspan had been resisting pressure to tighten monetary policy for several years. In 1999, the Fed did raise rates on three occasions, by a quarter of a percentage point each time, but these hikes only reversed the emergency rate cuts it had introduced in the fall of 1998 following the near-collapse of Long Term Capital Management, a prestigious investment firm that had overextended itself. At the start of 2000, short-term interest rates stood at 5.5 per cent—almost exactly where they had been in the summer of 1995, when Netscape went public.

Low interest rates weren't Greenspan's only contribution to the stock-market boom. His frequent references to the benefits of new technology, and his refusal to criticize excessive speculation, also played an important role. Greenspan argued that the Fed, instead of second-guessing the educated judgments of investors, should stick to monitoring inflation pressures in the economy. This reasoning went unchallenged, but it wasn't supported by history. One of the main reasons that the Fed was founded, in 1913, was to prevent a repeat of the speculative busts that had become increasingly common in the previous half century.

By the start of 2000, however, even Greenspan had become worried about what was happening in the stock market. It was hard to classify day-traders buying and selling stocks whose names they hardly recognized as calculating, well-informed investors. To the Fed chairman, they looked more like day-trippers to Atlantic City plunging on red or black. Privately, he joked that he would like to introduce a law prohibiting day-traders from buying a company's stock unless they could identify the product the company produced. Greenspan still believed that it was impossible to identify a speculative bubble definitively, except in retrospect, but he was now pretty much convinced that one had developed, at least in parts of the stock market. When he looked at the prices that investors were paying for Internet stocks, he found them bizarre.

Moreover, the real economy and the financial economy were now intertwined—a classic symptom of a late-stage speculative bubble. The rising stock market had fuelled an unprecedented spending spree on the part of consumers and firms. There was no sign of the economic growth slowing. If anything, it seemed to be accelerating. American consumers were spending every dollar they earned, and then some. According to some measures, the personal savings rate had turned negative, which meant that people were borrowing money, or depleting their assets, to finance their spending. Many were borrowing to buy stocks. Greenspan had been proceeding on the assumption that the Fed could concentrate on the real economy—inflation, unemployment, and productivity growth—and ignore the ups and downs of the stock market. This assumption was no longer tenable. As a result of the stock-market boom, the economy was threatening to spiral out of control.

On January 13th, Greenspan, speaking at the Economic Club of New York, dropped a clear hint that he was finally ready to raise interest rates. The next day, the Dow reached an intra-day high of 11,908.50 and closed at 11,723. Nobody knew it at the time, but the index had peaked, at least for this economic cycle. During the following two weeks, the Dow fell by almost a thousand points, as investors began to digest the possibility of an interest-rate hike. Internet stocks also slumped, particularly the stocks of online retailers, which were hit by disappointing retail sales for the holiday buying season.

On Sunday, January 30, 2000, the Super Bowl took place, in Atlanta. The St. Louis Rams beat the Tennessee Titans, 23–16, but the real business of the day took place during the commercials. Seventeen Internet advertisers bought spots that cost as much as two million dollars each. They included Computer.com, Epidemic.com, OnMoney.com, LifeMinders.com, Kforce.com, and OurBeginning.com. The fact that these companies were willing to spend millions of dollars to attract the attention of sozzled and semi-sozzled football fans was an apt metaphor for the Internet boom. What was once a good idea had degenerated into a nonsensical ritual. Even sober Super Bowl viewers seldom remembered more than one or two of the ads they watched—a fact confirmed by Harris Interactive, a Rochester-based polling firm, which surveyed them. The ad most respondents said they recalled seeing was E*Trade's offbeat commercial, which featured a dancing chimpanzee and the line "We just wasted two million bucks."

On Wednesday, February 2nd, three days after the Super Bowl, the F.O.M.C. agreed to raise rates by a quarter of a point and to couple the move with a public warning that more hikes might well lie ahead. The F.O.M.C. declared that it "remains concerned that over time increases in demand will continue to exceed the growth in potential supply, even after taking account of the pronounced rise in productivity growth. Such trends could foster inflationary imbalances that would undermine the economy's record economic expansion." Now that the Fed had formally abandoned its hands-off approach to the stock market, the speculative bubble had entered its terminal phase.

On Thursday, March 9th, the Nasdaq closed above 5,000 for the first time. The passing of this milestone, coupled with the threat of higher interest rates, jolted some investors back to reality. During the following few weeks, technology stocks, and Internet stocks in particular, fell sharply. By the second week of April, the same self-reinforcing process that had propelled stock prices into the stratosphere had begun operating in reverse. The herd mentality was as strong as ever, but investors were now selling. The technology that had made it so easy to buy stocks now made it just as easy to unload them: all it took was a simple phone call or a few clicks of a mouse.

As people shifted their savings out of technology funds and aggressive-growth funds, mutual-fund managers were forced to sell stocks that were already slumping, causing them to fall even further. The steep declines in many stocks had prompted a number of brokerage houses to issue margin calls—demands for more money—to their customers, some of which couldn't be met. This, in turn, prompted further selling by the brokerage houses in order to raise cash. The falling market fed on itself, just as the rising market had fed on itself.

The Nasdaq's slide was big news, and it shared the front pages with the saga of Elián Gonzalez, whose Miami relatives had refused to have him returned to Cuba. Tens of millions of Americans had their life savings invested in stocks. An entire generation had grown up knowing only a rising Dow and economic good times. If stock prices continued to plummet, the prosperity that the country had enjoyed for the past nine years would be threatened, with profound implications for the Presidential race, the federal budget, and much else besides.

On the morning of Friday, April 14th, investors tuned in to CNBC and CNNfn with trepidation. New inflation figures showed prices rising faster than they had risen at any point in the past five years. This development, combined with another report of strong retail sales, meant that further interest-rate hikes were virtually inevitable. (Some analysts were predicting that the F.O.M.C. would raise rates by half a point at its next meeting.) Shortly after 11 A.M., CNNfn's Terry Keenan reported, "We are seeing waves of selling hitting the Nasdaq right now. Yahoo! is down seven, Oracle down five, Amazon.com down five, Cisco is down two. And the carnage continues—an incredible sell-off." Unlike Black Monday, in 1987, when the stock ticker fell hopelessly behind and many brokers refused to answer their phones, there was little outright panic. The trading systems had been improved since 1987, which made it easier to track the market's fall.

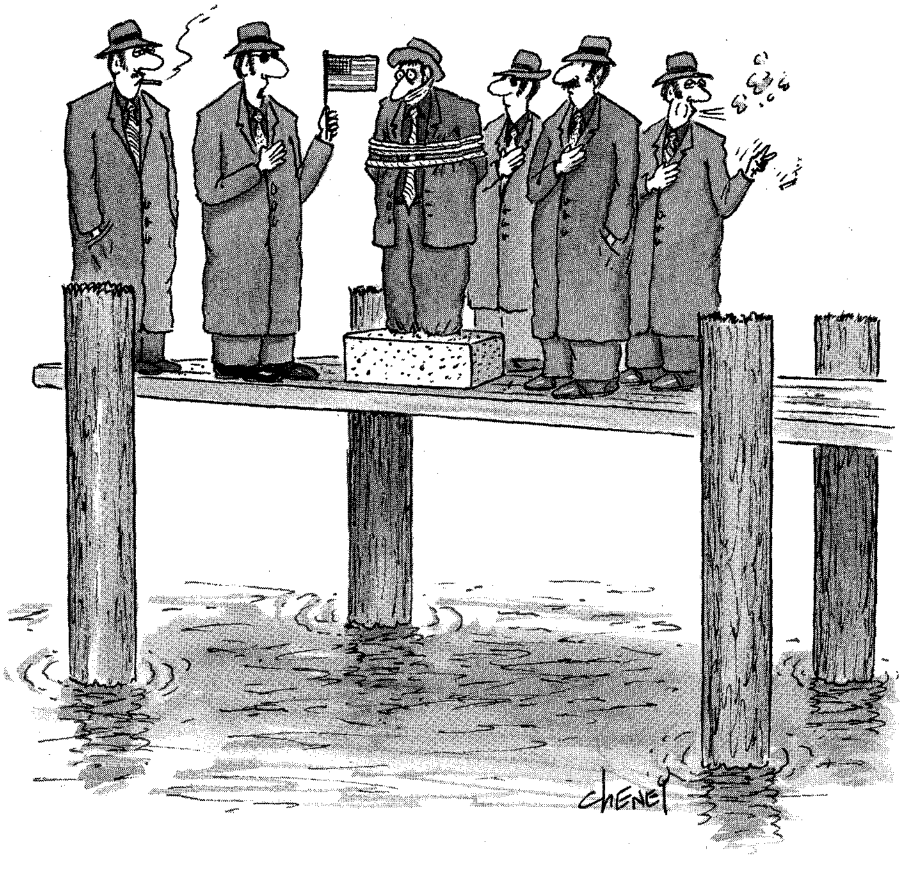
The selling on Black Friday, as April 14th came to be known, was across the board. Banks, airlines, and consumer companies got marked down alongside New Economy stocks. After the market closed, with the Dow down by more than 617 points and the Nasdaq down by more than 355 points, the Treasury Secretary, Lawrence Summers, appeared on CNN and appealed for calm, saying, "I'm confident that the economy will continue to grow over the next while, with fluctuations from quarter to quarter as always, but our fundamentals are sound." Summers's words had a familiar ring. On October 25, 1929, the day after Black Thursday, President Herbert Hoover had said, "The fundamental business of the country—that is, the production and distribution of commodities—is on a very sound and prosperous basis."

Try as they might, Wall Street's bulls were unable to write off what had happened as a "healthy correction" or a "flight to quality." The bullish psychology, upon which everything depended, had shattered. Henry Blodget, Merrill Lynch's Internet analyst, conceded that there was little chance of putting it together again, at least for now. "There's no reason everything should suddenly recover in the near term," Blodget told the Washington *Post*. Even James Cramer, a journalist and investor, who was perhaps the loudest and most vociferous voice of the bull market, admitted to Matt Lauer on the "Today" show that the bubble had burst. "And I can tell you that it's a sobering and humbling experience," he said. "I feel I went from being, you know, top of the game to being pretty humiliated." Cramer's own Internet company, TheStreet.com, had suffered badly during the crash and was presently trading at five dollars. When he was asked whether the era of entrepreneurs raising millions of dollars on the basis of an idea had come to an end, Cramer replied, "Yeah, it's over. The gold rush is over."

The collapse of the Nasdaq was an important moment in American history. In the previous five years, the stock market, particularly the Nasdaq, had been a symbol of American technological leadership and economic power. Most of all, it had been a symbol of American self-confidence. Ronald Reagan used to claim that the nineteen-eighties represented "morning in America," but this claim rang somewhat hollow in an age when gnarled operators like Ivan Boesky and Robert McFarlane were busy going about their business. It was during the nineties, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and victory in the Gulf War, that the United States really rediscovered a feeling of youth and vigor. Old restrictions seemed to slip away, and the country stepped into the future like an animal shedding its winter coat. The rise of Silicon Valley and the Internet was something fresh, untarnished by financial scandal or memories of Vietnam. It gave new life to the most potent American myth of all: that the future is boundless.

Now this myth had been exposed. Within a few weeks, trillions of dollars of wealth had been expunged. Suddenly, the country faced a future with limits: economic limits, political limits, and cultural limits. In Washington, the assumption of budget surpluses stretching out indefinitely would have to be rethought. On campuses, students would be forced to reconsider their career choices; with the lure of instant riches from an Internet startup removed, law school or medical school might not be such a bad bet after all. In boardrooms, corporate executives would have to reconsider their strategies for creating shareholder value. Simply developing an online division or floating an Internet tracking stock would no longer be enough. And, everywhere, the belief that it was possible to make easy money by buying and selling pieces of paper would have to be relinquished.

For almost a year and a half after the Nasdaq crash, there was a marked reluctance to accept that the long boom had come to an end. From Alan Greenspan down, economists in the public and private sectors insisted that any economic downturn would be shallow and short-lived. On Wall Street, while the Nasdaq showed little sign of recovering, the Dow remained stubbornly above 10,000, even though the financial outlook for many of its constituent companies was steadily deteriorating. Most remarkable of all, American consumers, the mainstay of the economy, refused to accept that they couldn't continue spending practically every dollar they earned, and that, at some point, they would have to start rebuilding their savings. Even in the early summer of 2001, when economic growth had virtually stopped, consumer spending increased at a fair pace. Not until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, did most Americans finally acknowledge that the nineteen-nineties were over, and that a darker, more uncertain future had dawned. ♦



"But first our national anthem."

FICTION

JUSTINA'S PRIEST

BY WILLIAM TREVOR

CAROYL LA BARGE/NONSTOCK

Only Justina Casey made sense, Father Clohessy reflected yet again, shaking his head over the recurrence of the thought, for truth to tell the girl made no sense at all. The contradiction nagged a little in a familiar way, as it did whenever Justina Casey, sinless as ever, made her confession. It caused Father Clohessy to feel inadequate, foolish even, that he failed to understand something that as a priest he should have.

Leaving the confessional she had just left herself, he looked around for her. At the back, near the holy-water stoup, she trailed her rosary through her fingers. "Father, I'm bad," she had insisted and, allotting her her penance, he had been again aware that she didn't even know what badness was. But without the telling of her beads, without the few Hail Marys he had prescribed, she would have gone away unhappy. Of her own volition, every few days she polished the brass of the altar vases and the altar cross. She would be there on Saturday evening, a bucket of scalding water carried through the streets, the floor mop lifted down from its hook in the vestry cupboard. On Fridays she scraped away the week's accumulation of candle grease and arranged to her satisfaction the out-of-date missionary leaflets.

Fifty-four and becoming stout, with his red hair cut short around a freckled pate, Father Clohessy watched while Justina Casey dipped the tips of her fingers in the holy water and blessed herself before she left the church. Her footsteps were soft on the tiles, as if she were of less importance than the sacred ground she walked on, less than the burning candles and the plaster Virgin, less even than the unread missionary leaflets. He remembered her at her First Communion, standing out a bit from the other children, a scraggy bunch of lilies of the valley pressed close to her. It was afterward that she'd asked him if she could look after the brass.

The door of the church closed soundlessly behind her, and Father Clohessy was aware of an emptiness, of something taken from him.

Justina dawdled, examining the goods in the shopwindows. There were the tins of sweets in Hehir's, and the glass jars in a row behind them, half full of the mixtures, the jelly babies and bull's-eyes, soft-centered fruits, toffees. There were the fashions in Merrick's, the window changed only a week ago; meat in Cranly's, delft and saucepans in Natton's. A fine dust had gathered on the dry goods in MacGlashan's, on packets of Barry's tea and the advertisements for Bisto and chicken-and-ham paste. Cabbage drooped outside Mrs. Scally's, the green fringe of the carrots was tinged with yellow.

"How's Justina?" Mrs. Scally inquired from the doorway, the flowered overall that encased her girth crossed over on itself beneath her folded arms. She always had her arms folded. One shoulder taking the weight against the doorjamb, a single curler left in her hair, slippers on her feet and the folded arms: that was Mrs. Scally unless she was weighing out potatoes or wrapping a turnip.

"All right," Justina said. "I'm all right, Mrs. Scally."

"I have apples in. Will you tell them up in the house I have apples in?"

"I will."

"There's a few tins of peaches that's dinged. I wouldn't charge the full."

"You told me that, Mrs. Scally."

"Did you mention it in the house?"

"I did surely."

Justina passed on. She had spoken to her sister Maeve about the peaches and her sister hadn't said anything. But Mr. Gilfoyle had heard her saying it and he'd laughed. When Micksie came in he said that if the dent in the tin caused rust you'd have to be careful. Micksie was Maeve's husband; Mr. Gilfoyle was his father. Diamond Street was where they lived, where Maeve ruled the small household and most of the time was unable to hide the fact that she resented its composition. Maeve was capable and brisk of manner, a tall, dark-haired childless woman. She considered that she'd been caught: when their widowed mother died, there had been only she to look after Justina. And Maeve had been caught again when her father-in-law, miserable with the ailments of old age, had to be taken in; and again in not realizing before her marriage that Micksie was happiest in a pub. "Oh, I have children all right" was how she often put it when there was sympathy for her childlessness.

Justina bought an ice cream in the Today Tonight shop. The evening papers had just come off the Dublin bus. "NO-VOTE A WINNER," the headline said, and she wondered what that meant. People she knew were gathering items from the shelves, minerals in bottles and tins, frozen food from the central refrigerator, magazines from the racks. She walked about, licking at her ice cream, nibbling the edge of the cone. Up one aisle and down another, past shoe polish and disinfectant and fire lighters, carton soups reduced, everything handy in case you'd forgotten to get it in Superquinn.

"You're a great girl," one of two nuns remarked, reaching out for Kerrygold butter and dropping it into her wire basket. Older and more severe, the other nun didn't say anything.

"Ah, I'm not," Justina said. She held out her ice cream, but neither nun licked it. "No way I'm great," Justina said.

"What kept you?" Maeve asked in the kitchen.

"Mrs. Scally was on about the peaches. Sister Agnes and Sister Lull were in the Today Tonight."

"What'd you go in there for?"

"Nothing."

Justina paused for an instant and then she told about the ice cream and Maeve knew it was because her sister had suddenly considered it would be a lie to hold that back.

"God, will you look at the cut of you!" She shouted, furious, unable to help herself. "Aren't there jobs to do here without you're streeling about the town?"

"I had to make my confession."

"Oh, for heaven's sake!"

"What's up, Maeve?"

Maeve shook her head. She could feel a weariness in her eyes which made her want to close them, and then felt it spreading through her body. She returned to what she'd been doing before Justina came in, slicing cooked potatoes.

"Lay the table," she said. "Take your anorak off and lay the table."

"I got a letter from Breda," Justina said.

She had closed the back door behind her but hadn't come further into the kitchen. She had a way of doing that, just as she had a way of standing by the sink, not getting on with what she was there for, as if she'd forgotten everything. All their lives, for as long as Maeve could remember, she had been irritated by this shortcoming in her sister, as she was by Justina's bringing back messages from the shopkeepers to say this or that commodity had come in or that there was a new bargain line. There were the telephone calls that came from a farmer nearly six miles from the town to say that Justina was again feeding his bullocks bunches of grass. Not that he objected, the man always said, only the bullocks could be frisky and maybe crowd her.

"Will you read me Breda's letter, Maeve?" Justina said.

"You keep away from that one, d'you hear me?"

"Sure, Breda's gone."

"And she'll stay where she is."

"Will I lay the table, Maeve?"

"Didn't I ask you to?"

"I'll lay it so."

Father Clohessy walked in the opposite direction from the one taken by Justina. The sense of loss that had possessed him when she left the church this afternoon had given way to a more general feeling of deprivation that, these days, he was not often without. The grandeur of his Church had gone, leaving his priesthood within it bleak, the vocation that had beckoned him less insistent than it had been. He had seen his congregations fall off, and struggled against the feeling that he'd been deserted. Confusion spread from the mores of the times into the Church itself; in combating it, he prayed for guidance but was not heard.

A familiar melancholy, not revealed in his manner, accompanied Father Clohessy in the minutes it took him to reach the limestone figure of the rebel leader in the square that was the center of the town. That he considered it necessary to keep private his concern about the plight of his Church did nothing to lighten the burden of his mood, any more than the temporary absence from the parish of Father Finaghy did. At present undergoing a period of treatment after a car accident, Father Finaghy was extroverted and gregarious, a priest who carried his faith onto the golf course, where it was never a hindrance. "Arrah, sure we do our best," Father Finaghy was given to remarking. Father Clohessy missed his companionship—almost a protection it seemed like sometimes.

"Have you change, Father?" a young woman begged from a doorway, a baby asleep in a shawl beside her. "A few coppers at all today?"

She said she'd pray for him and he thanked her, finding the coins she hoped

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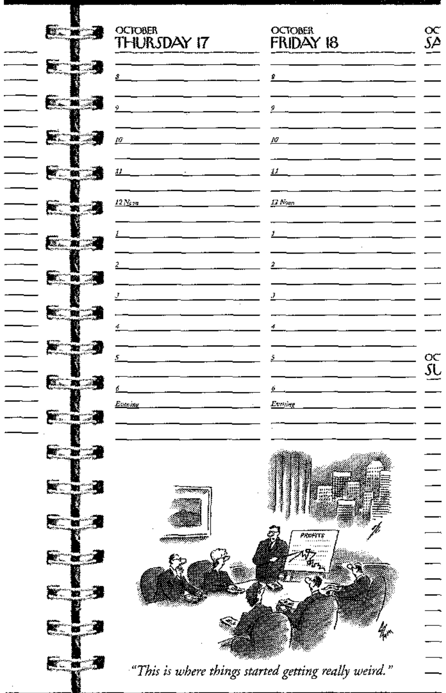

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for. He knew her; she was usually there. He might have asked her when he'd see her at Mass, but he didn't bother.

Music blared across the small square from Mulvany's Electrical and TV, giving way to the careless whine of Bob Dylan. Mulvany had established for himself a tradition of celebrating the birthdays of popular entertainers by playing a tribute: today Bob Dylan was sixty. Although one song only was played on these occasions, and no more than once during the day it related to, Father Clohessy considered it a disturbance in a quiet town and had once approached Mulvany about it. But Mulvany had argued that it was nostalgia for the older citizens to hear the likes of Perry Como or Dolly Parton coming out of the blue at them, and exciting for the youngsters to have the new arrivals on the music scene honored. That a priest's protest had been so summarily dismissed was par for the course—an expression often used by Father Finaghy in his own unprotesting acceptance of the decline of clerical influence. The times they are a-changin', Bob Dylan's reminder was repeated yet again before there was silence from Mulvany's loudspeakers.

"Isn't that a grand day, Father?" a woman remarked to him and he agreed that it was and she said thank God for it. He wondered if she knew, if any of them knew, that when he preached he was angry because he didn't know what to say to them, that he searched for ways to disguise his distress, stumbling about from word to word. "How's Father Finaghy?" the woman asked him. "Have you heard, Father?"

He told her. Father Finaghy was making good progress; he'd heard that morning.

"Wouldn't it be the prayers said for him?" the woman suggested, and he agreed with that, too, before he resumed his journey through the town to where he and Father Finaghy lodged.

His tea was ready for him there. Comeraghview, called after the mountains in the faraway distance, was a gray detached house, with a handkerchief tree in a front garden protected from the main road by gray iron railings. It was he and Father Finaghy who had decided that the presbytery could be put to better use, who, with their bishop's permission and in the end with his blessing, had given it over to become the youth center the town had long been in need of.

"I have ham and a salad for you," Father Clohessy's landlady said, placing this food in front of him.

"I will of course," Mr. Gilfoyle said when Justina asked him to read Breda Maguire's letter to her. "Have you it there?"

Justina had, and Mr. Gilfoyle suggested that they take it out the back where they'd be in private. His daughter-in-law went ballistic these days at any mention of Breda Maguire, never mind having to hear of her doings in Dublin. Time was when someone who'd take her sister off her hands was a relief for Maeve, but now that the two girls were grown up and Breda Maguire had gone off the rails it was naturally different.

"*I'm living in a great joint!*" he read aloud in the small flowerless back garden that had become a depository for the abandoned washbasins and lavatory bowls and perforated ball cocks that his son had replaced in his work as a plumber. Nettles had grown up around cast-iron radiators and a bath; dandelions and docks flourished. Mr. Gilfoyle had cleared a corner, where he kept a chair from the kitchen; on sunny mornings he read the newspaper there.

He was a mustached man, gray-haired, once burly and on the stout side, less so now. His pronounced stoop, an arthritic shoulder, trouble with gallstones, fingers affected by an industrial disease, had made another man of him. In his day he, too, had been a plumber.

"*The kind of house you wouldn't know about*," he read out, imagining what was described: a place where theatre people lived, coffee always on the go, late mornings. Mr. Gilfoyle found it hard to believe that Breda Maguire had been given accommodation there, but he supposed it could be true.

Justina, sitting on the edge of the bath, had no such difficulty. She accepted without demur all that was related. She saw her friend in the green-and-blue kimono that was described. "*Like a dragon wrapped round me*," Mr. Gilfoyle had read out and explained that a kimono was Japanese. He felt what he believed to be a gallstone changing position inside him somewhere,

a twitch of pain that was only to be expected at his age.

"Davy Byrne's you'd never see only it's jammed to the doors. The racing crowd, all that kind of thing." Breda Maguire was on the streets, Mr. Gilfoyle said to himself. She had money, you could tell she had, nothing made up about that. The house she said she was stopping in was out Islandbridge way and again there was an echo of the truth in that, handy for the quays. The quays were where you'd find them, a bricklayer told him once, maybe fifty years ago, and it could still be where a man would go to look for a street woman. *"I have a friend takes me out,"* he read. *"Billy."*

"Will you listen to that!" Justina whispered. The name of a hotel where there were dances was mentioned, shops, cinemas. A wrist bangle had been bought, and Justina saw her friend and Billy at a counter with a glass top like the one in Hennessy's the Clock Shop, necklaces and bangles laid out for them. She saw them in a café: a waitress bringing grills, the same as Justina had seen people eating in Egan's, and a chop and chips, bacon, egg, and sausage. Billy was like the air pilot in the film she and Breda had watched on the television the day before Breda went off. *"How's tricks with yourself?"* Mr. Gilfoyle's voice continued.

It would be impossible for Justina to respond to that because her learning difficulty deprived her of any communication that involved writing words down. But Breda had remembered, as naturally she would. *"I'll maybe give you a call one of these days,"* Mr. Gilfoyle read out. The pain had shifted, had gone round to the back, like a gallstone maybe would.

"Isn't Billy great, the way he'd give her things?" Justina said.

"He is, Justina."

"Isn't Billy a great name?"

"It is."

Covering a multitude of sins, Mr. Gilfoyle assumed, a stand-in name for names Breda didn't know, the presents another way of putting it that money had changed hands in some quayside doorway.

"I'll dream about Breda and Billy," Justina said, slipping down from the edge of the bath.

Father Clohessy listened when Justina put it into her confession that Maeve was cross with her because Breda telephoned. She put it into her confession that she went into the kitchen to tell what Breda had said and Maeve wouldn't listen, and the next thing was she let drop a cup she was drying. It was then that Maeve began to cry, tears streaming down her cheeks, down her neck into the collar of her dress. As if it wasn't nuisance enough, an old man who didn't know how to make his bed forever on about his ailments. As if it wasn't enough, Micksie in and out of the pubs, a girl with learning trouble, the back garden a tip. Was there a woman in Ireland could put up with more, when on top of everything a hooer the likes of Breda Maguire got going again after they thought they'd seen the back of her?

All that Justina put into her confession. She was bad, she said. One minute she was laughing with Breda on the phone; the next, Maeve was crying in the kitchen. Breda said come up to Dublin and they'd have great gas. Get the money however, Breda said. Get it off Mr. Gilfoyle, anything at all. Take the half-two bus, the same as she'd got herself. Come up for the two days, what harm would it do anyone? "I'll show you the whole works," Breda said.

The fingers of Father Clohessy's hands were locked together as he listened, his usual pose in the confessional, head turned so that one ear could pick up the revelations that were coming through the gauze of the grille. Among his confessants, it was only Justina he ever interrupted and he did so now.

"Ah no, Justina, no," he said.

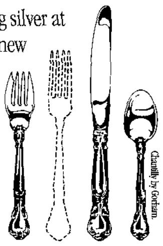
"Will I say a Hail Mary for Maeve, Father?"

"You wouldn't want to go up to Dublin, Justina. You wouldn't want to upset your sister more."

"It's only Breda's gone up there."

"I know, I know."

He remembered the two of them when they were no more than five or six playing in Diamond Street, Justina's black hair cut in a fringe and curling in around her face, Breda as thin as a weasel. She'd been the bane of the nuns when she'd attended the convent, sly and calculating, all knowing talk and unspoken defiance. She'd plastered herself with lipstick when she was older; in the end she'd worn a T-shirt with an indecency on it.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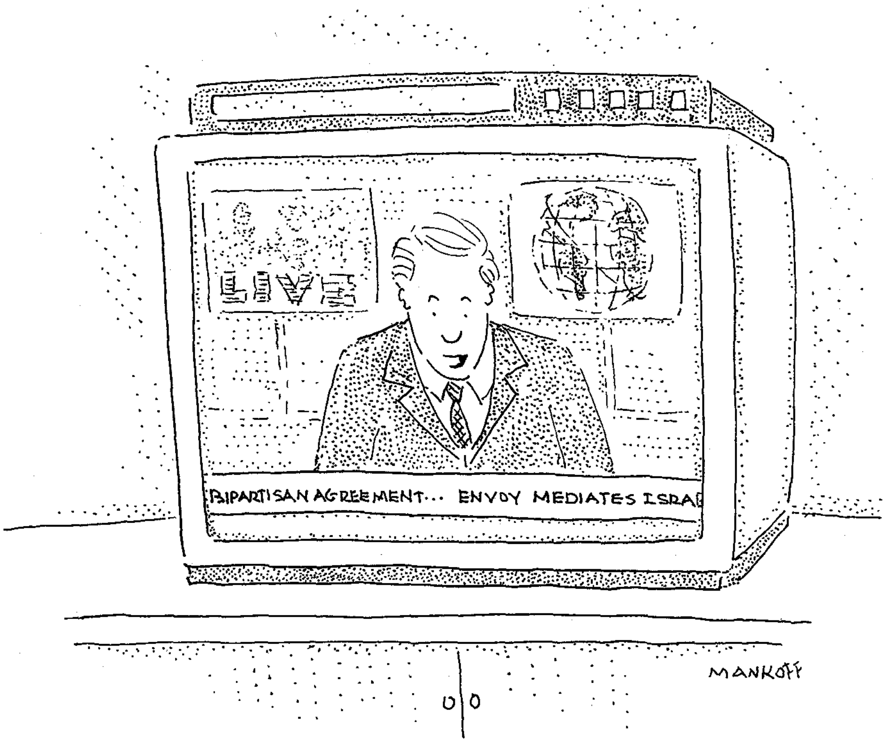
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"Hey, cool, there's stuff written on the back of the crawl."

• •

"Would it be bad to go up on the bus, Father?"

"I think maybe it would. Have you anything else to confess, Justina?"

"Only Maeve was crying."

"Light a candle when you'll leave the confessional. Do the floor on Saturday, do the brasses."

Before she left the confessional he murmured a prayer for her, knowing that was what she liked to hear best of all. It frightened him that she might visit her friend, that she might forget what he had said, that somehow she might acquire the bus fare, that she'd go, not telling anyone.

Two days later, when Justina was washing the church floor, Father Clohessy called at the house in Diamond Street.

"Come in, Father, come in," Mr. Gilfoyle said. He led the way into a room where a football match was in progress on the television, Aston Villa and Arsenal. His son had been watching it, Mr. Gilfoyle said, but then a call had come through, a tank overflowing on the McCarron estate. Mr. Gilfoyle turned the football off. Maeve had gone out for rashers. She'd be back in no time, he said.

They talked about a job Mr. Gilfoyle had done years ago in the church, putting in a sink in the vestry. Father Clohessy said it was still going strong; in use all the time, he said.

"A Belfast sink," Mr. Gilfoyle said. "A Belfast sink was the name we had for that fellow. You wouldn't see the better of it."

"No."

"Sit down, Father. I have to sit down myself. I have trouble in the old legs."

A sound came from the kitchen. Mr. Gilfoyle called out to his daughter-in-law that Father Clohessy was here and when Maeve came in, still in her coat, a scarf tied round her hair, Father Clohessy said, "I wanted a word about Justina."

"She's being a nuisance to you?"

"Ah no, no."

"She lives in that church," Maeve said.

"Justina's welcome, Maeve. No, it's only she was mentioning Breda Maguire. I'm concerned in case Justina might try to make her way to Dublin."

There was a silence then. The priest was aware of Mr. Gilfoyle being about to say something and changing his mind, and of Maeve's unbelieving stare. He watched while she restrained herself: once or twice before, she had been abrupt to the point of rudeness when he'd been concerned about her sister. He didn't say anything himself; the silence went on.

"She never would," Maeve said at last.

Successful in controlling her irritation, she failed to keep an errant note of hope out of her tone. It flickered in her eyes and she shook her head, as if to deny that it was there. "How could she, Father?"

"The bus goes every day."

"She'd need money. She spends every penny soon as she gets it."

"I just thought I'd say. So you could keep an eye on her."

Maeve did not respond to that. Mr. Gilfoyle said Justina would never board that bus. He'd walk down to the square himself and keep a lookout where the bus drew in.

"It would be worse if she got a lift off someone."

Wearily, Maeve closed her eyes when Father Clohessy said that. She sighed and turned away, struggling with her anger, and Father Clohessy felt sorry for her. It wasn't easy; she did her best.

"We'll keep an eye on her," she said.

That night, when Father Clohessy closed his church after the late Saturday Mass, he wondered if he had become prey to despair, the worst sin of all in the canon that was specially a priest's. At street corners, in the square, men stood in conversation, lit cigarettes, argued the chances of Offaly the next day. Women linked arms, talking as they strolled. Children carried away chips from O'Donnell's. The grandeur might have gone from his Church, his influence fallen away to nothing, but there was money where there'd been poverty, ambition where there'd been humility. These were liberated people, who lived their lives as generations before them had not. They wore what they wished to wear, they said what they wished to say, they stayed or went away. Was the price of this that the woman he had visited would rid herself of a backward sister if she could? It was on a Saturday evening little different from this one that he had first read the legend on Breda Maguire's T-shirt, bold yellow letters on black, simple and straightforward: *Fuck Me.*

On the streets of the town he had always known, people spoke to him, warmly, with respect. They wished him good night, they wished him well. He could not blame them if in his sermons he didn't know what to say to them any-

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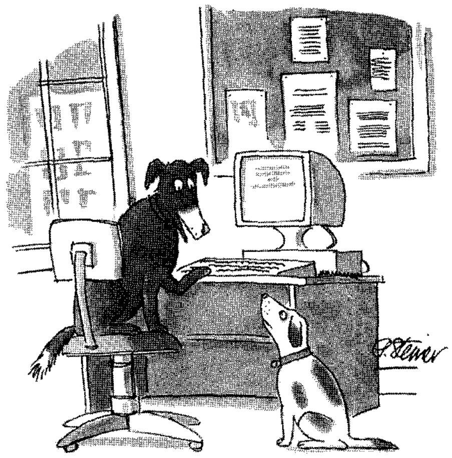

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more. He should apologize, yet knew he must not. In the square, he entered the Emmet Bar, between the old Munster & Leinster Bank, now an A.I.B. branch, and Mulvany's television shop. Father Finaghy always called in on Saturdays after they closed the church, and he sometimes did himself—to drink a couple of glasses of Beamish's stout and smoke a couple of cigarettes while he talked to two men with whom he had attended the Christian Brothers' forty years ago. Both had done well enough in the new prosperity, had fathered children and seen them educated, were decent men. He liked them as much as he always had, even sometimes was envious of their uncomplicated lives. They, not he, did the talking in the Emmet Bar, always sensitive to the cloth he wore. Neither of them had mentioned it when a few years ago a well-loved bishop had been exposed as the begetter of a child, nor when there had been other misdemeanors on the part of other clergymen.

"Bring us the same, Larry," the bulkier of the two called out, a bright-colored tie loosened in his collar, freckles darkening his forehead. Clumsy hands pushed the empty glasses across the bar. "And one for the Father."

"I wouldn't see Offaly victorious," his companion remarked, tidier, wiry, a salesman of agricultural implements. "No way."

Music was faint in the crowded bar, as if coming from some other room or conveyed through apparatus that was faulty; laughter exploded in guffaws, or rippled, hardly heard.

"Thanks," Father Clohessy said, reaching for the glass that had been filled for him.

A sense of isolation, often creeping up on him during a Saturday evening in the Emmet Bar, did so again. Centuries of devotion had created a way of life in which the mystery of the Trinity was taken for granted, the Church's invincible estate a part of every day, humility part of it, too, instead of rights plucked out of nowhere, order abandoned. What priests and bishops had been—their strength and their parish people's salvation—was mocked in television farces, deplored, presented as absurdity. That other priests in other towns, in cities, in country parishes, were isolated by their celibacy, by the mourning black of their dress, had been a consolation once, but that source of comfort had long ago dried up.

The Offaly flags would be hoisted all right if Ger Toibin had been fit, his companions were agreeing. The final score was predicted; he joined in that, the talk went on. Houses were to be built on the Tinakilty road where the old cement works had been. Madden's Hotel would be closed for six months while improvements were put in. There were rumors of a fertilizer outfit taking over Williamson's Yard.

"Are you off so?" Father Clohessy heard himself asked when half an hour had passed, then heard it said that he would surely have another.

He shook his head, finishing his second cigarette and stubbing out the butt. There were a few more exchanges before he pushed his way through the drinkers, his hand shaken once or twice, salutes of farewell.

In the darkening streets of the town his reverie continued. A kind of truth it was, somewhere at the heart of his vocation, that there should be awareness of the holy world that was lost—yet he could not ever deny that vocation claimed its postulants as it wished. Companionable and easy, Father Finaghy led the singsongs in the Emmet Bar on a Saturday evening, a little tipsy and none the worse for that.

Slowly, as Father Clohessy walked on, these well-worn reflections were left behind in the town that was half closed down for the night. Nothing replaced them for a while, before the careful hands of Justina Casey lifted down the altar ornaments, her polishing rags and Brasso pads tidily laid out. She touched away from a lily a petal that had gone brown. She scraped off the candle grease that had accumulated on the candleholders. She rearranged the missionary leaflets.

It was what there was; it was what he had, whether he understood it or not. Justina Casey would stay in the town because Mr. Gilfoyle would make sure she didn't get on the Dublin bus. Maeve would keep an eye on her; after a time Breda Maguire would forget about her. In the confined space of the confessional there would again be the unnecessary confessions, again the granting of absolution. Then happiness would break in the face that saw God in his own. ♦

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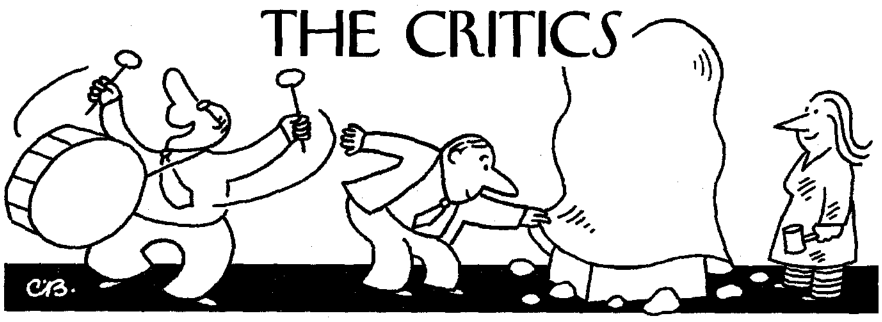


DANCING

PLAY IT AGAIN

Pina Bausch and William Forsythe return to BAM.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

Pina Bausch and William Forsythe, who turned up with their German-based companies at the Brooklyn Academy of Music recently, are the two most influential choreographers in Europe today. Actually, Bausch has left a deep print in America, too. In New York's "downtown" dance scene of the late eighties, dancing was largely replaced by a violent sort of drama, in which, very often, someone was dying and the audience was to blame. If I had to name the reasons for that, the first would be AIDS and the second would be the 1984 American début of Bausch's company, the Tanztheater Wuppertal. On her stage, there were slashings, rapes. The dancers threw each other into walls. When they got tired of that, they assaulted themselves. In one show, a man (seemingly) sliced off a piece of his hand, cooked it on a hot iron, and ate it.

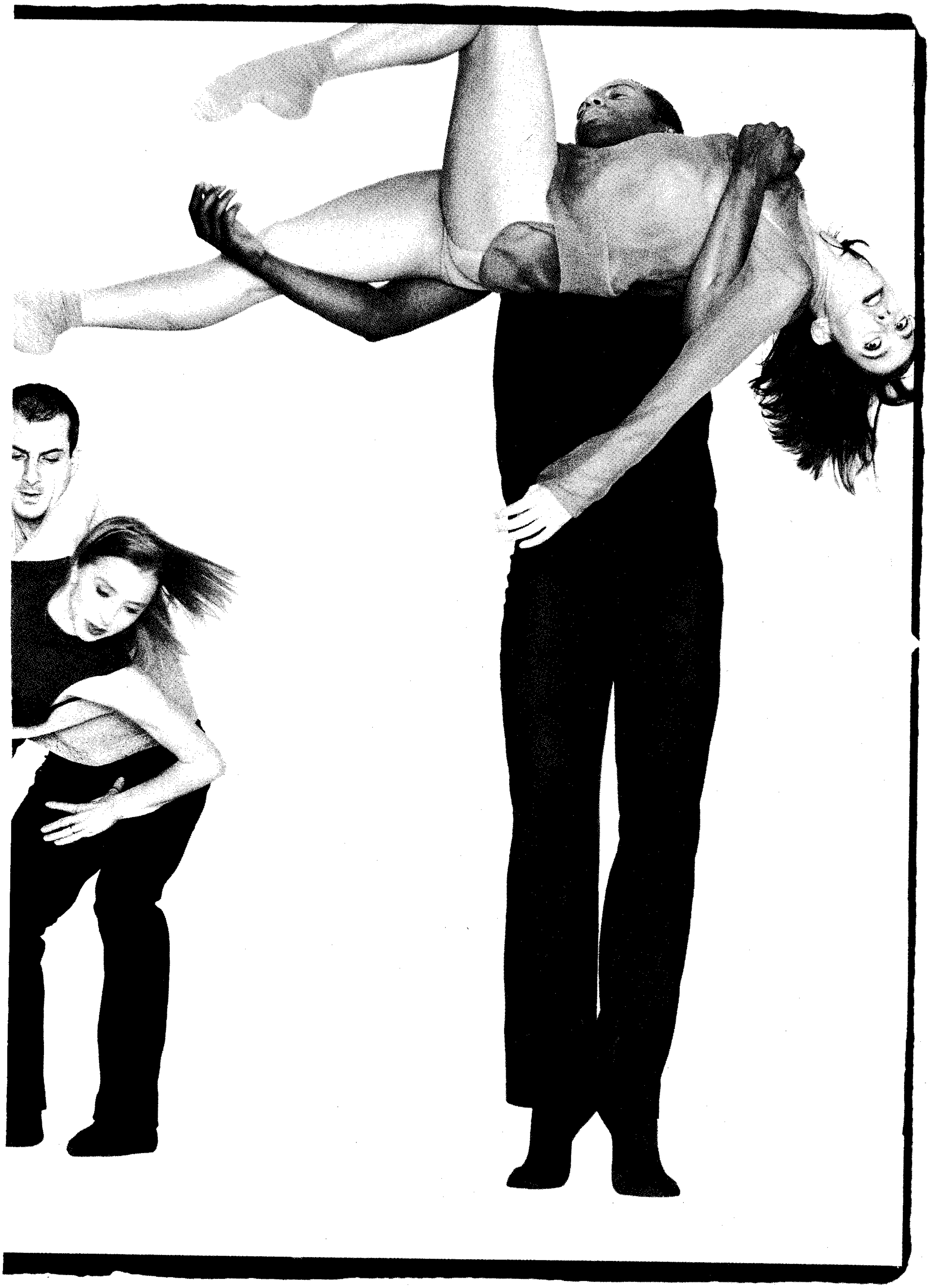
The work was violent in form as well. By the eighties, Bausch had more or less abandoned dance in favor of "dance theatre." Each piece was basically a series of skits, united only by theme, and from piece to piece the theme was pretty much the same: sex, cruelty, or absurdity, or (usually) all three. The work was often long and sometimes intermissionless. You couldn't have a drink or go to the bathroom, because Pina Bausch wanted to tell you that the center could not hold. Her New York fans tended to see this as strikingly experimental. A curious view. Duration? Had these people seen "Einstein on the Beach"? Miscellany? Had they heard of "happenings"? Bausch was also acclaimed for breaking through the fourth wall, having her dancers intrude on the people in Row A, shake their hands, ask them for money. Had the acclaimers heard of Brecht, or the Living Theatre?

But, in fact, Bausch *was* new, in content if not in form. She had an emotional territory all her own, one that was defined not by pain, exactly, but by some subdepartment of it, some vague and clammy feeling—discomfort, embarrassment—and magnified by the extreme physical immediacy of the work. Animals often appeared on Bausch's stage, not to speak of the four elements. At least two pieces that I saw took place on a dirt floor; another transpired in ankle-deep water. You don't just look at this stuff; you feel it. That is all the more true of Bausch's use of the body. In her shows, you are always looking up someone's nose or armpit. People are forever lifting their dresses, spitting into each other's mouths. You feel they are breathing in your face, crawling into your clothes with you.

For years, Bausch used this formula to say that life was hell. Then, inexplicably, she cheered up. Indeed, she went commercial. Various cities decided that it

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CALLIS

Ballett Frankfurt's Amancio Gonzalez, Dana Caspersen, Stephen Galloway, and Jone San Martin performing Forsythe's "Quintett."



would be nice to have a Pina Bausch work all their own, and she obliged, making pieces for Palermo, Los Angeles, Hong Kong. The note of disaster was not altogether gone. ("Palermo, Palermo" began with a five-ton concrete wall crashing down onto the stage.) But there were no more rape scenes, and the tone was different: kinder, jokier. Such is the show that Bausch just brought to BAM, the 1998 "Masurca Fogo" ("Fiery Mazurka"), made for Lisbon. It has nice Portuguese things in it, videotapes of forests and flamingos, but otherwise it's much the same Pina Bausch show that we're used to, a sort of Expressionist "Saturday Night Live." Once again, she makes us laugh and squirm at the same time. (A woman soaps herself in an onstage bathtub while pulling dinner plates out of the bath and giving them to a man to dry. We think, Are we going to have to eat off these plates?) Once again, the dancers intrude on the audience. (They ask us to dance.) Once again, there's an animal, a chicken this time. The night I was there, the bird's act backfired. Whatever she was supposed to do, she decided the heck with it, and clawed her way up the body of her escort, the Wuppertal veteran Beatrice Libonati. Libonati exited promptly, with the chicken in her hair.

All this is done anti-realistically, with dream logic: disjuncture, displacement, ambiguity. And the more ambiguous it is the better it is. My nomination for the best skit was a very ordinary one. A woman in a low-cut dress and spike heels comes out and puts a bowl of something or other in front of a man. He begins eating it, like a child, with a big spoon, meanwhile staring at her. She exits and reënters, bringing more food—a pie, a plate of fruit. He goes on staring and eating. It's small, but it's a lot: mother, food, sex.

Duration is still a big item in Bausch's work. "Masurca Fogo" ended, by my count, three times. Each time, people in the audience clapped, thinking they could now go home. When the show finally seemed like it was ending for good, with the dancers all snuggling on the floor, and a video showing us big Portuguese flowers blooming in time-lapse photography (read: sex, Latin style), you could almost hear a sigh of relief in the auditorium. Then one of the dancers got up. "No, no!" my heart cried out. "Don't do something new, please!" And she didn't. She walked offstage, and the curtain came down at last.

Still, "Masurca Fogo" was a good show. Bausch is recycling, but who can blame her? She's been choreographing for more than thirty years. In this piece, she tried to vary her formula by interweaving her skits with solos for each of the dancers. But the solos were pretty much the same: whiplash turns, flailing arms. They looked improvised. In any case, they weren't much. "Masurca Fogo," like all of Bausch's work, is its skits.

I once wished that those skits were different. I wished that the men were not always imposing themselves physically on the women—a tradition that still survives in "Masurca Fogo." (A man and a woman bob for apples. When she puts her face in the water, he "helps" her, by holding her head down. He holds it down for a long time.) I wished that, in return, the women were not always humiliating the men—for example, in the scene with the mother and the son and the food. I also objected to the constant suggestion of collusion, the way the dancers had, as they were lighting farts or throwing things at each other, of turning to us and smiling as if to say, "Don't look shocked—you want to do this, too." (Does this kind of thing go over in Germany? Do people think, Boy, you really told me something about myself?) More than anything else, I would have asked that Bausch try developmental rather than serial form—just try it, and see if she couldn't make her art describe a longer span, and be intelligent between scenes as well as within scenes. But she is sixty-one now, and I am not asking anymore. She is who she is.

William Forsythe, ten years younger than Bausch, is an American, from Long Island. He spent his apprenticeship years with the then hip Joffrey Ballet, after which he went to Germany and began choreographing for the Stuttgart Ballet and other companies. In 1984, the Germans decided that they wanted to keep him, so they made him the director of Ballett Frankfurt. By now, he is a sort of national hero in Germany—something like what Balanchine was in America, an outsider who insiders think can tell them their own story.

Forsythe's breakthrough piece was the 1979 "Love Songs," in which, to the accompaniment of Aretha Franklin and

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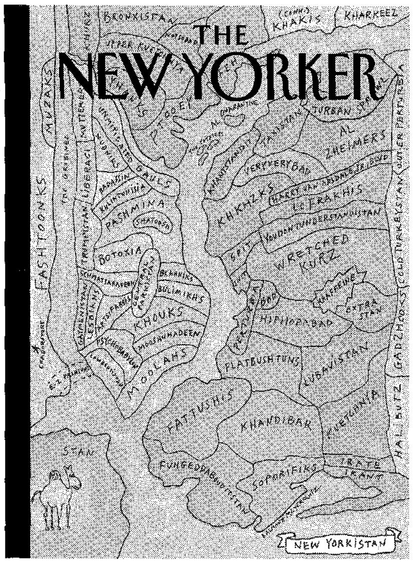

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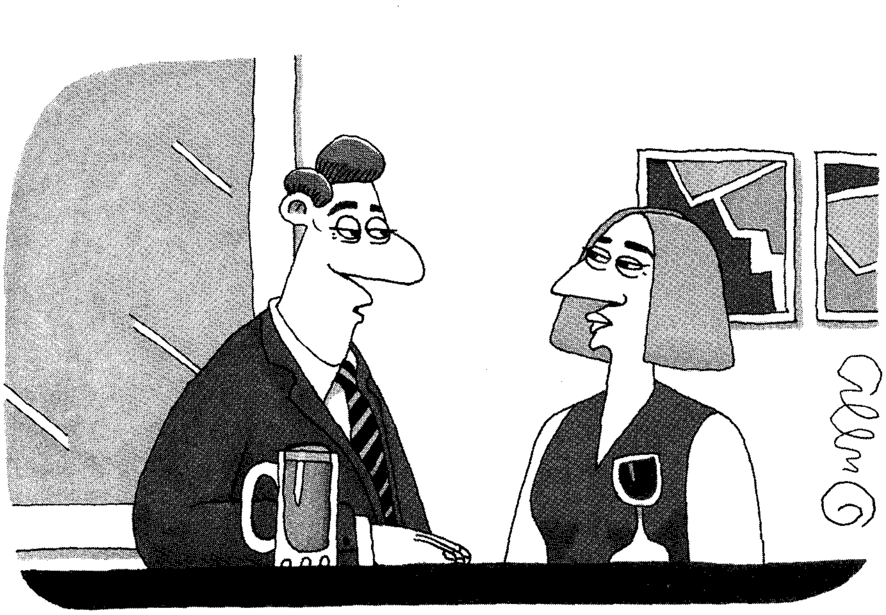

"My wife doesn't understand me, and I bet she wouldn't understand you, either."

• •

Dionne Warwick, couples in night-club attire did the most violent things they could possibly do and still have it be called classical ballet. They damn near killed each other. Forsythe's later pieces for classical companies were in a similar vein, but colder. Tall, thin people came out in see-through costumes and kicked their partners (almost) in the face. "Forget 'Swan Lake,'" they said. "This is the new deal." The work was not just abrasive. It was also pretentious, full of snottiness and fanciness. For the 1995 "Eidos: Telos," Forsythe needed five pages of program notes to tell us what "eidos" and "telos" meant. His scores were usually "sound scores" and usually by the Dutch composer Thom Willems, whose work is like a recording of a train wreck.

In the program Forsythe brought to BAM in December, he showed us three pieces, spanning twelve years. The newest one, "Woolf Phrase" (2001), was a stylish little nothing, wonderfully performed. It had almost no dancing—just two people acting out some passages from "Mrs. Dalloway." Then there was "Enemy in the Figure" (1989), in the style we think of as Forsythe's: the screw-you manner, the combative duets, the classical-ballet lexicon used primarily to push up the "style."

And then, bewilderingly, the program ended with a beautiful dance, "Quintett," from 1993. "Quintett" was Forsythe's tribute to his wife, the dancer Tracy-Kai Maier, who died of cancer at the age of thirty-two, leaving him a widower with two young children. In such a circumstance, Forsythe appropriately dropped his cool. In "Quintett," his five dancers—above all, two superb women, Jone San Martin and Dana Caspersen—took us on a long journey of fresh responsiveness, physical urgency and joy, and then extinction. By the time San Martin went to the grave—and it was a real grave, a hole in the stage (good for Forsythe; why be subtle at that point?)—I felt I was dying with her. That the score was not by Thom Willems but by Gavin Bryars—his "Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet"—made a big difference.

Still, the piece ended quite a while after you wanted it to. The Bryars chorus, on a tape loop, is played maybe a hundred times. The choreography is equally repetitive. As with Bausch, this indifference to the notion of development seems to me a renunciation of intelligence, a Warholism.

I have to say, on the other hand, that Bausch and Forsythe have a kind of stagecraft that our own, more classical choreographers never dreamed of. I also like their dancers, who are very different from ours: extroverted—confessional, even. I love the objectivity, the you-decide-ism of American dancing, but reticence works only if there's something to be reticent about, and American classical choreography is notably shallow these days. So I can't help admiring these European dancers, falling in love, falling down dead, telling us what they think the story is. ♦

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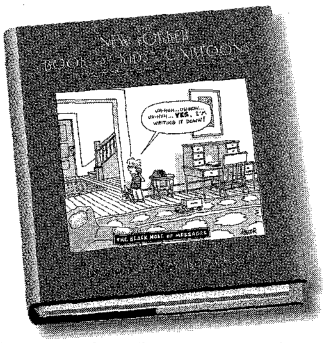

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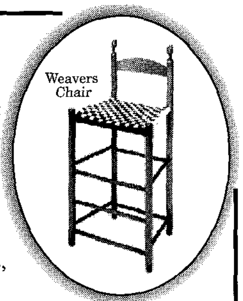

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BOOKS

ENIGMA

Anthony Blunt devoted his life to art—and espionage.

BY JULIAN BARNES

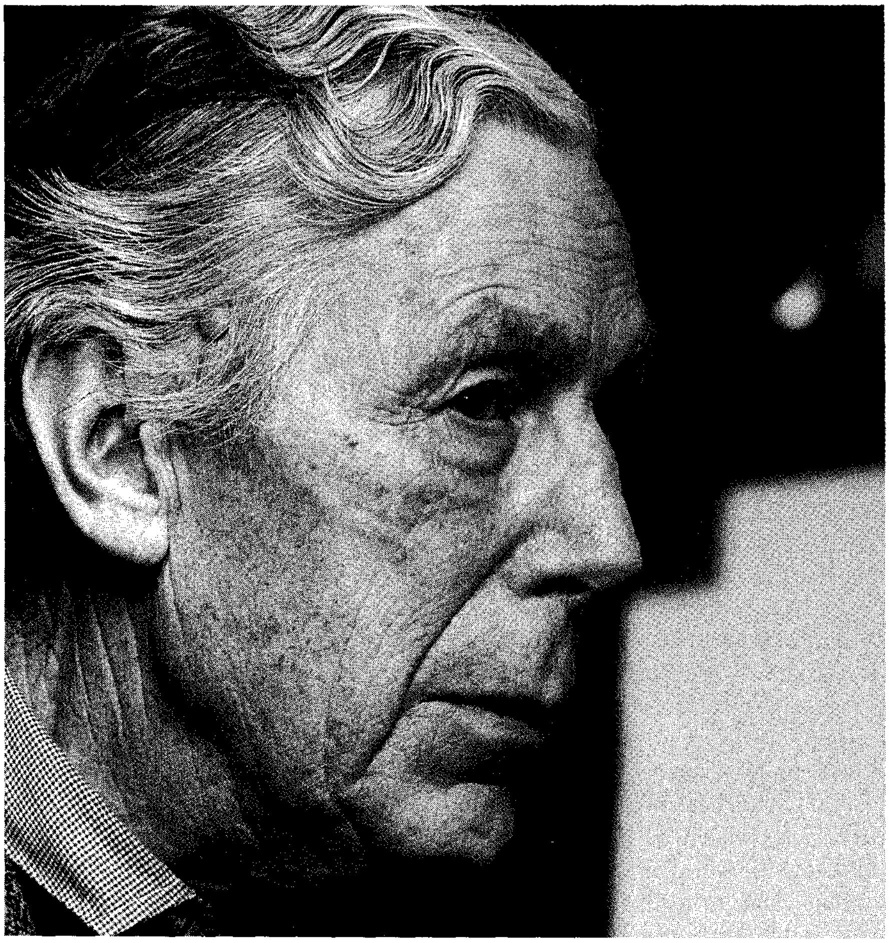
On a Saturday morning half a century ago, the overnight ferry from Southampton docked at Saint-Malo. While most passengers headed for the boat train to Paris, two members of the British ruling class took a leisurely breakfast with beer. When the train had been safely missed, they hired a taxi to drive them fifty miles (very ruling class) to Rennes, where they paid the fare of forty-five hundred francs but failed to give the driver a tip (not very ruling class). At Rennes, they caught a less obvious train to Paris, and were not seen again for five years.

The sureness of hindsight makes it obvious what was happening. Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, Soviet spies recruited while at Cambridge, were defecting to Russia. The Americans were onto them, and the British had scheduled their top interrogator, William Skardon, who had broken the atom spy Klaus Fuchs, to start work on Maclean the following Monday morning. Only the looseness of surveillance and MI5's disinclination to work on weekends allowed the two spies to escape. Over the next decades, the nettle roots of the Cambridge conspiracy were slowly pulled up. Burgess and Maclean led to the Third Man, Kim Philby (suspected 1951, defected 1963), the most durable and damaging of the group. The Third led to the Fourth, the art historian Sir Anthony Blunt (granted immunity 1964, outed 1979), who is now the subject of a compelling biography by Miranda Carter, "Anthony Blunt: His Lives" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $30). The Fourth Man led to the Fifth, John Cairncross, and to lesser, unnumbered agents.

But little of this seemed obvious at the time. Cyril Connolly, who knew both Burgess and Maclean socially (and had spoken to Maclean the day he escaped), became obsessed by their case, and published his speculations as "The Missing Diplomats" (1952). Missing: the neutrality of the adjective is eloquent. Connolly's monograph retains its fascination because of its very uncertainties and hesitant theories; its author, despite being an insider and despite the evidence in front of him, remains incapable of drawing the logical conclusions. For a start, what was a spy supposed to look like? Spies were known to be either grubby men seeking money or else idealists with staring eyes. Burgess and Maclean didn't fit either profile: they were public school and Cambridge, part of the "us" that for centuries had ruled "them." Connolly wrote of Maclean, a career diplomat, "We all felt that he was a rock, that if we were in trouble he would help us. . . . His charm was based not on vanity but on sincerity." Burgess was less conventional—a more reckless drunk, and incautiously homosexual—but in the days before he disappeared he had told a friend that he could never live abroad and was planning to settle down to "his great task, the addition of a final volume to Lady Gwendolen Cecil's biography of the Tory Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, which he thought the best biography in English." How could such men be traitors to the Crown?

They were, admittedly, well known among friends for their anti-British and anti-imperialist sentiments; each, separately, while drunk, had confessed to working for the Soviets. But Connolly's circle decided that "the more Communism they talk, the less likely they were to be agents." The stripes of their old-school ties neutralized any alcoholic lapses. Mark Culme-Seymour, a friend of Connolly's, had a late-night, lubricated conversation with Maclean which he anxiously reported to Connolly the next day. Maclean: "What would you do if I told you I was a Communist agent?" Culme-Seymour: "I don't know." "Well, wouldn't you report me?" "I don't know. Who to?" "Well, I am. Go on, report me." Connolly and Culme-Seymour analyzed this exchange and concluded that it must have been a contorted "loyalty test" devised by Maclean. "The whole incident seemed preposterous in the light of day."

Still, Burgess and Maclean had indubitably disappeared; and again Connolly's inconclusiveness about why and whither remains instructive. The missing diplomats might have gone off on an alcoholic fugue like Verlaine and Rimbaud. They might have flown to Moscow to try to help end the Korean War—a version of Rudolf Hess's famous mission. They could possibly be agents recalled to Moscow for liquidation, but if so why would they "sign their own death-warrants"? And so on. As for where they might be: there had been sightings from Andorra to Prague, Brussels to Bayonne. Connolly found himself "looking for them—it's infectious—in Zurich, Feldkirch, Lichtenstein." Burgess had apparently been glimpsed at Browning's villa at Asolo, and it is in Browning's poem of mysterious vanishing, "Waring," that Connolly finally locates them. "What's become of Waring / Since he gave us all the slip . . ." One answer to the poem's title question is that the vanisher might have gone East, perhaps to Moscow. But the narrator decides against it: "In Russia? Never! Spain were fitter!"



Blunt was both a highly effective spy and a highly effective Royal courtier.

THE TIMES/CAMERA PRESS/RETNA

Unlike Waring, Burgess and Maclean did not escape into poetic myth; they turned up, prosaically, in Moscow in February, 1956. The significance of the story they began is not mythical, either, but very concrete, both socially and politically. The British have become noticeably less impressed by their supposed superiors over the past half century: the monarchy has increasingly made itself ridiculous; Tony Blair was reëlected last year with the biggest display of voter apathy in decades. The social class that took for granted its right to rule and administer no longer commands automatic respect. One key factor in that loss of respect is the case of the Cambridge spies.

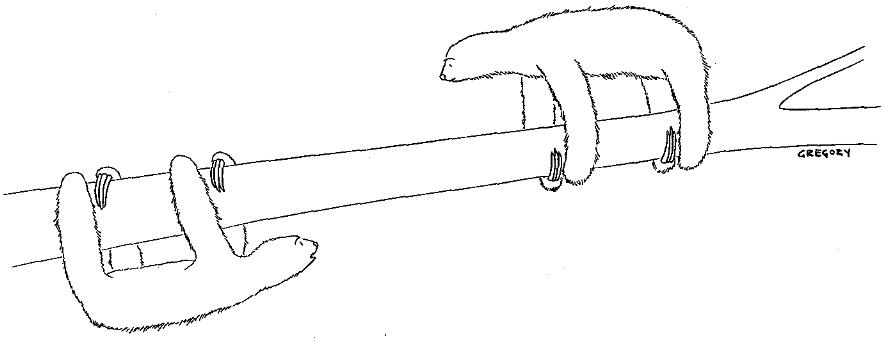
Anthony Blunt was the son of a vicar, an Evangelical Anglican who was in charge of the British Embassy church in Paris during the First World War, and of a shy, virtuous, dominant mother. As a weedy boy with perfect French, he was unpromising material for an English public school, but found his niche at Marlborough as an aesthete. There he edited the magazine *Heretick* with another softy, John Betjeman; half a century on, Betjeman would become the popular, cuddly face of art appreciation, Blunt (who always made Betjeman feel "trivial and shallow") its academic, reviled face. Like his elder brother Wilfrid, Anthony soon realized he was homosexual; he acclimatized the more easily of the two. At twenty-eight, Wilfrid consulted a Harley Street specialist about his sexuality. He later recalled that the doctor had told him to treat his condition as a disability, "like being blind or deaf. Or, he added—rather charmingly, and as if in afterthought—a Jew (he was clearly one himself)." Both brothers kept the secret from their parents and, strangely, from one another; they finally exchanged confidences some time after the Second World War, at a Windsor Castle reception.

We expect our spies to have divided selves, for their psychology to serve their political pathology. Blunt's psyche was one watertight bulkhead after another, which explains why he was so hard to sink. He was capable of being a highly effective spy and a highly effective Royal courtier; a committed Marxist and a full-time member of the establishment. Among those of his own age and class, he was often aloof and self-absorbed, the ultimate halibut among cold fish; with the young he was witty and unpompous. In Britain he was all buttoned up; abroad, on holiday, he could be skittish and silly. He could be at his most intimate on the lecture platform, at his most formal *en tête-à-tête*. Although his homosexual ambitions were idealistic ("He seemed to want it all to be, oh, the classical world, Plato, all that sort of thing: dignified, honorable," a lover of his recalled), the reality was unequal partners and a lot of rough trade. Michael Levey, onetime director of the National Gallery, found him a social enigma: "Even as we sat there, I might ponder on whether one would describe him as modest or vain, unworldly or intensely alive to the exercise of power, genuinely absorbed by our talk or privately aloof and barely engaged." John Golding, friend and executor, called him "the most compartmentalized man I ever met." Blunt once appeared as a guest panelist on the TV quiz show "Animal, Vegetable or Mineral," and the question might equally have been put about him.

Blunt was recruited at Cambridge by Burgess in "late 1935, early 1936," and asked to talent-spot promising left-wing undergraduates. He was idle, or at least unsuccessful, in this, finding only two or three recruits in the period 1937-39. But when the war came he joined Military Intelligence and immediately started supplying classified information; in 1940, he moved into MI5, where he monitored diplomats from neutral countries and invented a system for surreptitiously opening diplomatic bags. He also surreptitiously rifled colleagues' desks. It was efficient, regular work: once a week from 1942 on, he would meet his Soviet control, between nine and ten in the evening, in a different part of London, to hand over his swag. According to the Russian Intelligence Archives, he passed 1,771 documents to the N.K.V.D. between 1941 and 1945. (In comparison, Burgess supplied 4,605, Maclean 4,593, and Cairncross 5,832.) He carried on providing low-grade information for five years after the war; his last major contribution was to act as liaison man for Burgess and Maclean's defection.

The other spies were more prolific data suppliers, but remain interesting largely to the extent that they were agents: motives, style, tradecraft, mistakes. Their professional and personal lives were much at the service of their lives as spies. Blunt was a diligent, cool-headed traitor for two decades, yet this was the smaller part of his life. His overt expertise was in French art and architecture. He was (legally) recruited first by the Warburg Institute in London, then moved to its rival the Courtauld, where he eventually became director. He catalogued Old Master drawings at Windsor Castle and, in 1945, became Surveyor of the King's Pictures. He wrote the first article in English on Georges de la Tour, and helped bring about a reëvaluation of Poussin, curating the Louvre's first exhibition of the artist, in 1960. If his scholarship was sometimes questionable, his authority was not: Carter judges that in the fifties he was "the most powerful and influential man in British art history"—though he was less known to the public than Kenneth Clark. Anita Brookner, who studied under him at the Courtauld, said of her generation, "We all wanted to be like Blunt."

It was the fact and nature of this separate, acclaimed existence—there he was, advising the National Trust, whispering in Her Majesty's ear about Titian—that enraged those who finally came to judgment on Blunt. It was Blunt who had planned Burgess and Maclean's escape route, and then managed to get himself appointed to "help" MI5 work out what could possibly have happened; Blunt who remained snugly in place while Philby was suspected, forced to resign, publicly exonerated by the Foreign Secretary, and then encouraged (or allowed) to flee. Confident that there wasn't enough evidence to convict him in a courtroom, Blunt had declined to defect, and traded what he knew (or, this being the world of espionage, what little he chose to add to what he knew they already knew) for immunity from prosecution. Fifteen years of insecure anonymity followed, until he was described by the historian Andrew Boyle, named by the satirical magazine *Private Eye*, and denounced from on high by Margaret Thatcher: "And it damn well serves him right." By this time, Burgess was dead and Maclean and Philby were safe in Moscow; Blunt, now a septuagenarian retired academic in remission from cancer, was subjected to a contumely magnified by the previous unavailability of his fellow-spies.



"How long have you been on antidepressants?"

His worldly honors were withdrawn. The loss of his knighthood was an indignity shared in the twentieth century by villains as various as the Irish traitor Sir Roger Casement and Nicolae Ceauşescu. The British press was its enthusiastic moralistic self. The *Sunday Telegraph*, confusing two different Blunts, claimed that Anthony had been responsible for the deaths of forty-nine Dutch agents; when Blunt asked his solicitor if this was libellous, the reply came that he had no good name left to defend, being already known as "a traitor and a homosexual." Blunt had been used to a certain level of abuse: Sir Alfred Munnings, president of the Royal Academy, had once sneered at him for being "high-brow" and an "expert." Now the populist sage Malcolm Muggeridge summed him up as a "pansy aesthete," as if either condition might be conducive to treason.

Ironically, Blunt's commitment to the Soviet Union was at best theoretical. His formidable mother, delirious on her deathbed, imagined herself in Russia, where, she complained, the food was "simply disgusting"; her son's austerity of daily living might have helped him survive had he fled, but the notion of inhabiting—or even closely examining—the workers' paradise was not on his agenda. Blunt was never taken seriously in left-wing Cambridge; in what seems a perfect paradigm of his life, he once left an anti-Fascist rally early in order to have tea at the Reform Club. His first control, a sophisticated European Communist, found him "a simple person"; later, his Russian control complained that he was interested only in architecture. Blunt never became disillusioned, partly because he never put himself in the way of facts that might have challenged his intellectual conclusions. The aesthete as revolutionary seems at first a contradiction in terms, as well as a stumper for counter-intelligence; but there is a logic to it. Pure Marxism always flourished best in academe.

Blunt began as a follower of Blooms-

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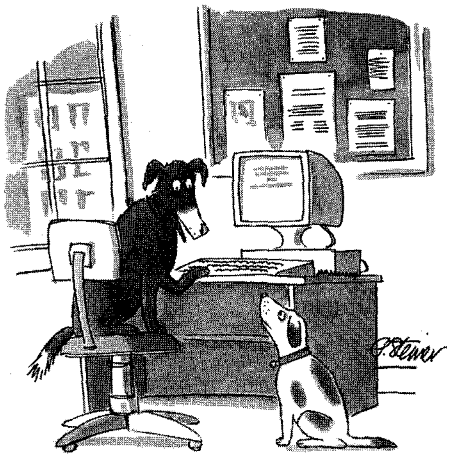

“On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.”

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bury, and those atheistic devotees of sexual amorality and the primacy of the emotional life have come in for the usual amount of blame. When asked in 1979 to explain his spying, Blunt put forward E. M. Forster's dictum that if asked to choose between betraying his friend and betraying his country, he hoped he would have the guts to betray his country. This much-quoted remark is—like Yeats's poser about perfection of the work versus perfection of the life—fine literary rhetoric but bogus as a dilemma. The choice rarely presents itself in this way. For a start, Blunt had two countries; among his British comrades, only Burgess was a friend (and, briefly, lover)—Maclean and Philby were merely associates. More to the point, if you betray your country, you by definition betray all your friends in that country who aren't themselves traitors. When the count is done, Blunt exploited, deceived, and lied to far more friends than he was loyal to.

Miranda Carter's skill at scouring the different compartments of Blunt's life is deeply impressive. Biography is at best an approximate genre, subject to selective memory, the hidden agenda, the hazard that gives survivors the last word, and so on. The biography of a spy is even trickier. Spy always rhymes with lie; intelligence agencies cover their tracks and gloss over their failures (the offer of immunity served MI5's purposes as well as Blunt's); governments spin. When a socially high-placed spy is disgraced, some of those who knew him well (Stephen Spender is the present instance) turn out not to have known him so well after all. On top of this, the world of espionage attracts all kinds of hangers-on who have only a loose acquaintance with reality: fantasists, conspiracy theorists, dupes, and dopes. Malcolm Muggeridge used to maintain that "diplomats and intelligence agents, in my experience, are even bigger liars than journalists"—though, since Muggeridge was himself both an agent and a journalist, the paradox of Epimenides would seem to apply. Carter is exceptionally clear-headed and skeptical about the sources she has to rely on; every so often a curt footnote will dispatch another dolt into oblivion. It is, therefore, an irony she will be best placed to appreciate that one of her own star witnesses has had his authority humiliatingly undermined since her book came out. The former Tory M.P. Rupert Allason, who writes books on espionage under the pseudonym Nigel West, advised Carter on the Russian Intelligence Archives and supplied her with documents from it. She praises him for being "sane and conscientious." Mr. Justice Laddie of the High Court begs to differ. At the end of last year, he presided over a case in which Allason claimed authorship and copyright of the memoirs of the Fifth Man, John Cairncross, and therefore large amounts of royalties from the publisher, Random House. Mr. Justice Laddie concluded that Allason had told "untruth after untruth" in the witness box, and rated as "one of the most dishonest witnesses I have ever seen."

What does seem clear from the K.G.B. archives, however, is that there was as much paranoia in Moscow as there was naïveté in London, and equal inefficiency in both places. About half the documents the British spies sent to Moscow were never even read; moreover, Moscow wasted key years suspecting the Cambridge group of being double agents. They seemed too good to be true, too successful, too suddenly well placed at the heart of British Intelligence. So with Russia at war with Germany, and their British spies producing untainted information about the enemy, Russian controllers ordered Blunt and company to prove their authenticity by writing schoolboy essays on "My Road to Marxism." Further, Moscow sent a surveillance team to London charged with the mission of catching the "double agents" secretly meeting their British controllers.

Here, too, is additional proof that intelligence agencies, whatever their presiding ideology, tend to mirror one another. Paranoid Moscow decides that there must a priori be an anti-Soviet conspiracy in the intelligence community of capitalist Britain; Blunt and company are ordered to find the evidence; and their repeated assertions that no such conspiracy exists are taken as proof that they must be double agents. Skip forward a couple of decades, and Blunt is being interrogated by the British after their promise of immunity. A new, unfoolable generation has replaced those gullible buffers who let their old-school-tie pals get away with it for so long. The new boys decide that there must be a big conspiracy within the service which still hasn't been uncovered; further, that if there was a Cambridge Ring there must logically also have been an Oxford Ring. Blunt's failure to provide corroboration for these theories merely confirmed that he was still holding out on them. (Maybe he was, but not, seemingly, about this.)

Until full access to the Moscow archives is allowed, we can't know exactly what damage Blunt did as a spy. Miranda Carter can tell us the what and the how, but the what is not fully in focus; we are given the number of documents Blunt passed, but not their exact nature and contents. Carter concludes that Blunt, unlike Philby, was responsible for no deaths on his own side. Indeed, since much of the information he passed was designed to help Russia in its war with Germany, it could be that indirectly he helped save Allied lives. On the other hand, he certainly told the Russians all he knew about precisely how the British secret services functioned.

Graham Greene compared the ruthless Philby to those English Catholics who worked for Philip II of Spain against the England of Elizabeth I. Greene also thought that tenacious Communists who kept the faith while Stalin did his worst were like Catholics during the Inquisition sustained by the belief that eventually a figure like Pope John XXIII would come along. With the collapse of Communism, the comparison seems more fanciful; it is still easier to understand those who betray and kill for a religious idea (certain paradise after death) than for a political one (promised paradise as long as all the targets of the next few Five-Year Plans are met). Could time make the Cambridge spies seem like idealists who backed the losing side—not Roman Catholics but, say, defeated purists like the Cathars? This seems unlikely; although Blunt exhibited much stoicism after his disgrace, he was always well short of nobility. Still, his rich contradictions have already provoked a stage play from Alan Bennett and a novel from John Banville. Perhaps Cyril Connolly was right all along, if about the wrong spies. Perhaps Blunt will finally escape into literature, the Waring of this age. ♦

THE ART WORLD

FOLKS

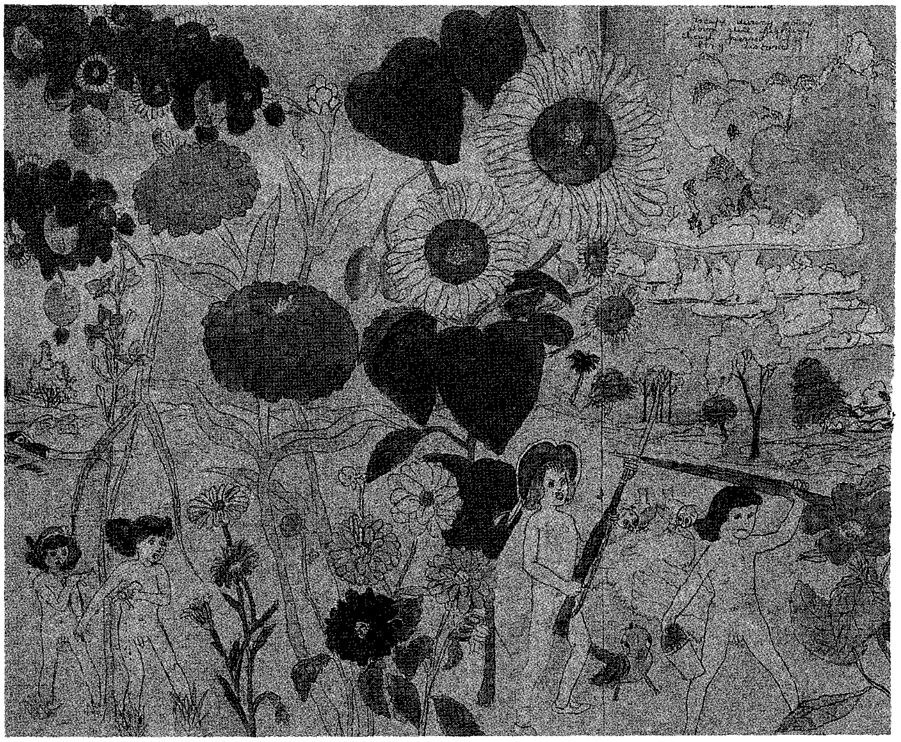
A new home for unsung artists.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

The new American Folk Art Museum, on West Fifty-third Street, is a pleasure machine, and its two inaugural exhibitions are strong delights. One, entitled "American Radiance," is a collection of more than four hundred objects given to the museum by Ralph Esmerian, the chairman of AFAM's board; the other is a selection of works from the museum's voluminous cache of visual and written material by the Chicago recluse Henry Darger. The Esmerian collection is an epic poem of connoisseurship. Darger was one of the singular artists of the twentieth century. Taken together, the building and the shows make for lively philosophical trouble. Each word in AFAM's name—"American," "folk," "art," and "museum"—acquires fresh, wobbly spin. Formerly called the Museum of American Folk Art, this reborn institution challenges conventional thinking about whirligigs and needlepoint samplers, among other artifacts, and a mad Chicagoan's midnight lucubrations.

Designed by the New York firm of Tod Williams Billie Tsien, the skinny building's lobby and four gallery floors are dominated by service facilities. Stairways, a balconied atrium, and the elevator housing occupy space that might appear absurdly disproportionate to the nooks and corridors that are left over for exhibits. But the elaborately accommodating, modestly palatial arrangement whets a viewer's powers of attention. At most museums, solid encounters with two or three works make my day. In two visits to AFAM, I've been jolted by scores of things—sometimes one after another, bang bang—that normally I would be tempted to ignore. The architectural strategy is jazzlike. Displays occur on offbeats of the space's perambulatory rhythms—each object feels like an unexpected discovery. The effect suggests a hip retail store, like Comme des Garçons or Prada, but with a beautiful irony: AFAM's goods are the opposite of glamorous. Rather than mirror a shopper's lust, they absorb the beholder in work by people who are orphans of history.

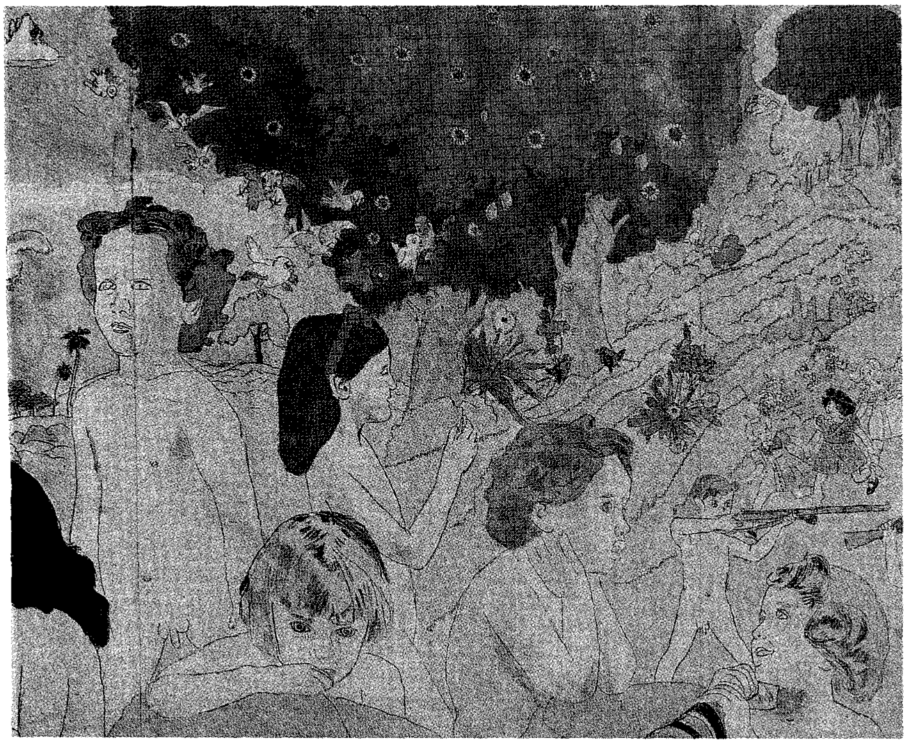
"Folk" are vitiated citizens. They belong to communities at odds with society. They may be set apart on religious principle, like the Shakers; by clannishness, like the nineteenth-century Pennsylvania Germans, who are a special focus of the Esmerian collection; as the result of ostracism, like racial minorities; or because of poverty or other ill fortune. Folk status may crystallize around objects that were once ordinary products of cottage industries but have since become obsolete—exotically old-fashioned. "Outsider" artists, like Darger, are folk cultures of one, oblivious of professional standards and peers. The terms "folk" and "outsider"—never mind the spineless euphemism "self-taught"—are hard to use without condescension, affirming a superior knowingness. The stereotypical folk-art fancier is both conservative and patronizing. Folk art can be to art as pets are to the animal kingdom.



An American Rousseau: A detail from one of the not-so-innocent watercolors that

AFAM's curators confront the basic problem—otherness—by scrupulously acknowledging their role in cherishing relics that have bygone or eccentric purposes. "American Radiance" begins on a carefully chaotic note, with three items: a small Pennsylvania slipware dish that, in 1966, was Esmerian's first acquisition; a tin tuxedoed man that was made in Long Island City in 1930; and a wooden sled decorated with the painted scene of a fancy-dress party by a New York amateur artist, June Ewing, in 1983. Only a collector's irrational certitude explains the grouping, which accents the oddity of its components. I wasn't sure I liked how that natty tin man was looking at me, with a complacent air of knowing something I'll never know. I felt a tremor of intimidation—the emotional signature of otherness that doesn't deign to ingratiate itself. Nearly everything on view possesses similarly obdurate dignity.

The show has eleven sections, each of which amounts to a sparkling mini-show. Portraits by itinerant artists vivify a genre that was scuttled by the invention of photography. Outdoor paintings include one of the finest of Edward Hicks's "Peaceable Kingdoms" and an anonymous, smartly tidy view of an industrious harbor captioned “Situation of America, 1848.” Every object holds its own in arrays of painted furniture, Pennsylvania ceramics, decorated wedding documents, narrative watercolors, scrimshaw, and even walking sticks. A red earthenware covered jar, with ridged and incised, glaze-daubed horizontal bands, would meet anyone’s daily requirement of beauty. A section entitled “Girls at School, Women at Home” made me reflect that needlework samplers, which advertise their makers’ names, are no more self-effacing a medium than wild-style graffiti. They seethe with personality. Three exquisite silhouette drawings by Bill Traylor, a former Alabama slave who died in 1949, stand out. (In a Maryland artist’s Civil War sketchbook, a black Union soldier jeers at a Confederate prisoner, “De bottom rails on top now.” The same might be said for the folk art at AFAM.) But even unknown, generic craftsmen speak idiosyncratically, their voices amplified by Esmerian’s exacting taste. The show commands respect.



er worked on for six decades to illustrate his saga of the Vivian girls.

Henry Darger might reasonably be shown at the Museum of Modern Art, instead of at AFAM. To me, he seems at least as significant a figure as Henri Rousseau, who was the first and—it turned out—last unschooled genius to win undisputed membership in the canon of twentieth-century art. (Rousseau had the advantage of well-connected promoters, such as Picasso.) The presence of AFAM’s Darger show on the same block as MOMA points to the prevailing schism between outsider and insider art which, increasingly, makes no sense. Art is art—an argument that AFAM advances with startling power.

Darger (pronounced with a hard “g”) was born in 1892. After his mother died and his sister was adopted, he was abandoned by his father to institutions for orphans and the “feeble-minded.” Largely uneducated, he worked at menial jobs, scrounged in garbage cans, walked the streets talking to himself, and attended Catholic Mass every day. When Darger died, in 1973, his landlord found his apartment filled with manuscripts and scroll-like watercolor paintings on paper—the work of six decades. Central to this extraordinary legacy was a fifteen-thousand-page novel by Darger entitled “The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What Is Known as the Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinnian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion.” The book is a richly imagined account of the fair and foul adventures of the seven Vivian girls in the cause of Christian adults and virtuous monsters against murderous enemies. Darger’s paintings—with imagery derived from magazines and coloring books—loosely illustrate the text while inventing an aesthetic genre all their own. Their composition and use of color deserve to be called masterly.

Darger’s work is rough stuff in many ways. Battle scenes run to extravagant gore, and certain physiological oddities are dismaying. Why do nearly all of Darger’s cute little girls, when naked, sport penises? I don’t know, and, on the evidence of attempted explanations that I’ve read, no one else does, either. Whether frolicking or fighting, the kids engage in nothing that looks much like sexual behavior. If that counts as innocence, it’s not terribly reassuring. One is in deep waters here, where precedents—William Blake? Lewis Carroll? Balthus?—are remote and few. Dismissing Darger as some kind of weirdo is not an option for anyone who spends time with him. His cosmos is thought through and expressed with imposing integrity. It can’t be picked apart. Recent signs of Darger’s influence—they include “Girls on the Run,” a book-length poem by John Ashbery—indicate that the Vivians are conquering their way to iconic status.

A nagging problem of folk or outsider art—one that has long been responsible for its quarantine from serious consideration—is naïveté. The conventional view holds that such work differs from fine art as birdsong does from opera. There is truth to this. As I wandered from exhibit to exhibit, I found myself wanting to come upon something by somebody who knew exactly what he or she was up to. Still, there is more raw aesthetic potency in many of the objects at AFAM—for example, an enormous weathervane that represents an Indian chief and, by happenstance, is pierced with a number of bullet holes—than one encounters at most shows in Chelsea. Our contemporary artists can learn a lot from a visit to this provocative new museum, starting with the indispensability of joy. ♦

THE SKY LINE

REQUIEM

Memorializing terrorism's victims in Oklahoma.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

The debate about how to memorialize the victims of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City—the only event in recent American history that comes remotely close to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan—went on for more than two years. Oklahoma City is a small town compared to New York, with a population of roughly five hundred thousand, and it is relatively homogeneous. There was no pressure to restore the site of the bombed building to commercial use, as there is at the World Trade Center, and yet the Oklahoma City National Memorial, as the park on the site is called, wasn't dedicated until the fifth anniversary of the bombing. The other half of the memorial, an interactive museum and information center, opened recently, nearly six years after the event it was created to commemorate. It is difficult to imagine things being easier, or moving faster, in New York.

The main feature of the Oklahoma City memorial is a set of a hundred and sixty-eight chairlike objects, made of bronze and glass, one for each person killed. The chairs are arranged in rows and spread out across the footprint of the Murrah Building. They face a large reflecting pool and an elm tree that escaped damage in a parking lot across the street. The tree became known as the "survivor tree," and it is now surrounded by a stone terrace. Two monumental bronze-panelled walls serve as gateways to the site. One of them is inscribed "9:01" and the other "9:03," marking the minute before the bomb went off on the morning of April 19, 1995, and the minute after. The space between the two gateways represents 9:02.

I went to Oklahoma City late this fall, when fires were still smoldering at Ground Zero. Larry Silverstein, who held the lease on the Trade Center towers, was loudly vowing to rebuild the same amount of office space, possibly in four shorter towers. Since then, Silverstein has quieted down a bit, and concedes that there might be room for various other things on the site. The head of the new state authority charged with rebuilding, John C. Whitehead, has said that he expects to build a memorial that is the equal of the Lincoln, Jefferson, and Vietnam Veterans Memorials in Washington, D.C., although he didn't indicate what he meant by that. He has also talked about including housing, office towers, and cultural facilities on the site, which is certain to arouse the ire of many families of the victims of the attack, who want it to be treated as hallowed ground.

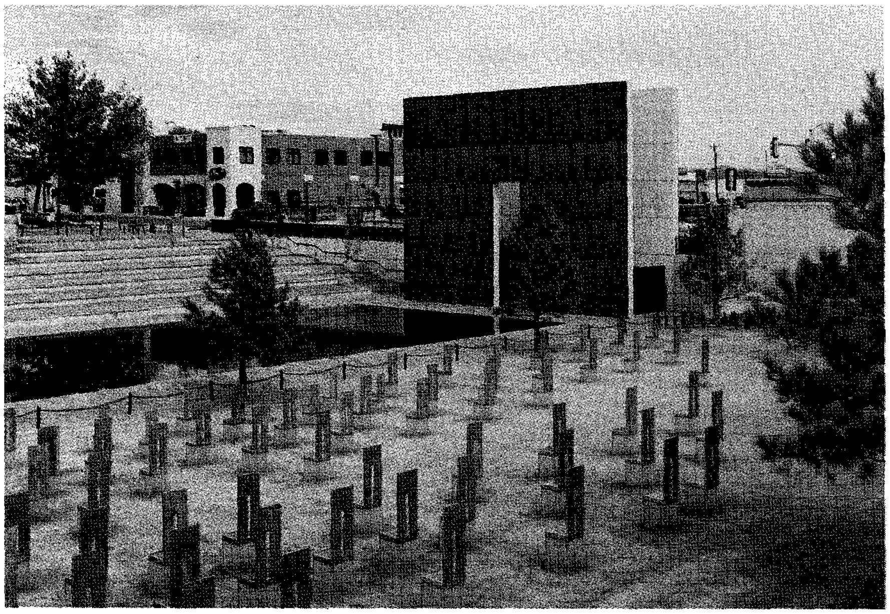
Oklahoma City faced many of the same issues. In "The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory"(Oxford; $30), Edward T. Linenthal writes that "conducting business as usual would defile the site in the eyes of many." Linenthal, who teaches at the University of Wisconsin and has also written about the struggle over the creation of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, sets out a narrative that prefigures many of the events surrounding the World Trade Center catastrophe. Firemen became national icons, fences became spontaneous memorials, covered with pictures, notes, messages, and memorabilia. Some people felt that "a new building would signal defiance of terrorism," Linenthal writes, and others suggested leaving the ruins in place as "an evocative reminder of loss, and of the enduring dangers of violence." The Oklahoma City wreckage became a kind of pilgrimage site, attracting both mourners and voyeurs.

Leaving the ruins of the Murrah Building as a monument in themselves was never much of an option. The governor of Oklahoma, Frank Keating, said that what was left was "an eyesore . . . a symbol of destruction and terror that people here would much rather put behind them." In the end, several nearby buildings that had been seriously damaged were taken down, the street that the Murrah Building faced was closed, and three acres was turned into a memorial district. A building that had been damaged and whose tenant chose not to return was used to house the museum.

Within days after the bombing, public officials in Oklahoma City had been deluged with suggestions for the obvious arches, obelisks, and fountains, as well as a statue of "two giant hands (God's hands)" and angels, doves, eagles, and hearts. The mayor of Oklahoma City, Ronald Norick, appointed a local lawyer, Robert Johnson, to head a task force to figure out what an appropriate memorial would be. Johnson was sensitive to the fact that people wanted to be heard, and he understood that the memorial had numerous constituencies—relatives of the people who were killed, those who escaped but were traumatized by the event, rescuers, and the general public. They had different priorities, different ways of mourning, and different aesthetic sensibilities.

The most important decision Johnson's task force made was to articulate the intentions of the memorial before thinking about any kind of physical design. The group struggled for months to create what it called a mission statement. The preamble to the final document declared that "we come here to remember those who were killed, those who survived and those changed forever. May all who leave here know the impact of violence. May this memorial offer comfort, strength, peace, hope and serenity." The task force had fought over every word. "Killed" won out over the soft-sounding "lost" and the harsher "murdered" (which would have excluded a rescue worker whose death was not a direct result of the explosion). The language of the mission statement was too sophisticated for angels and praying hands. The memorial was not to include a representation of any known person, "living or dead," which was a way of indicating that statues of firemen carrying babies were not particularly welcome.

An open architectural competition was held. The model was the competition for the design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, which yielded the best American memorial of modern times, a design by an unknown twenty-one-year-old architecture student, Maya Lin. The Oklahoma City task force asked Paul Spreiregen, the architect who managed the Vietnam-memorial competition, to oversee the process. Spreiregen felt strongly that he and other professionals should be the ones to choose the best design, and he made it clear that survivors and members of victims' families were to have no more than an advisory role. The families refused to accept that. Although Spreiregen complained that permitting nonprofessionals to make the design decision was akin to going "to an accountant to have my appendix removed," the families had their way, and Spreiregen was off the job before he had ever really started.


"The Field of Empty Chairs," in Oklahoma City. Photograph by Robert Polidori.

By almost every professional standard, Spreiregen was right. Victims' families can't be expected to make a knowing judgment about what constitutes the best public memorial. Giving them control would seem to be a concession to a kind of victims' culture, elevating sentiment over any other value. In the end, however, Johnson's gamble that he could trust the families proved to be right, in large part because the mission statement set forth a program for the memorial that made the kitsch that Spreiregen feared almost impossible. The competition eventually received six hundred and twenty-four entries, which were narrowed down to five finalists.

Not many big-name architects felt like putting their fate in the hands of a mostly nonprofessional jury, but the level of the finalists was at least decent. The winner, as in the Vietnam-memorial competition, turned out to be relatively young and unknown: a married couple, Hans and Torrey Butzer, Americans who at the time worked in Berlin. The centerpiece of the Butzers' design, which they prepared with the help of a German colleague, Sven Berg, was the rows of empty chairs. In this sense, it was not altogether unlike Maya Lin's Vietnam memorial, where the V-shaped wall of black granite is an abstract object and the names carved on it create a realistic counterpoint.

The Butzers are sophisticated but not as subtle as Maya Lin. The chairs are semi-abstract, with open bronze backs and bases made out of glass cubes that are lit from within (which makes the place look like a glowing field of votive candles at night), but they still resemble tombstones. They are arranged in nine rows, each of which represents one floor of the Murrah Building. The chairs commemorating the children who were killed are miniature versions of the adult ones.

The Oklahoma City memorial is most effective, I find, when it is viewed as a series of abstract shapes—the monumental gateways, the glowing cubes at night—although for a lot of people it is the very chair-ness of the chairs that is powerful. Great memorials use abstraction to engender feelings of peace and awe. The obelisk of the Washington Monument suggests George Washington's primacy in the history of this country in a way that no statue of him on horseback possibly could. The strength of the Lincoln Memorial comes at least as much from the rhythmic power of Henry Bacon's austere box of columns as from Daniel Chester French's seated figure of Lincoln, which it both encloses and ennobles. When you visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, you descend gently into the ground, on an axis with both the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, and you are uplifted by their grandeur while being drawn into a private, contemplative realm. The Butzers haven't achieved this in Oklahoma City, but they have made a place that is earnest and dignified, with architectural details on a high level.

Ever since Maya Lin inscribed the names of the Vietnam War dead on those black granite walls, it has been considered inappropriate to memorialize the dead as a mass, as they are at Gettysburg, for instance. The Oklahoma City mission statement stipulated that the memorial contain a hundred and sixty-eight pieces of something—it was left up to the architect to decide what. In addition to the field of chairs, the memorial has a section that lists survivors of the bombing on a granite plaque, and it also has a kind of children's garden, and the survivor tree. There is a lot going on, but in downtown Oklahoma City it is a welcome change to have a lot going on. The memorial is the most active piece of open public space in town, and the most elegant.

The adjacent museum is a mixture of conscientious history, special effects, and sentimentality. There is background material on the Murrah Building and testimony from people affected by the bombing, and one area is devoted to memorabilia and photographs of the people who were killed. Another section is a re-creation of the hearing room of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, which was across the street from the Murrah Building. You enter, and the door closes behind you as a tape plays the first two minutes of a meeting, and then you hear the blast and the room goes dark. The museum provides a much more American experience, really, than the outdoor memorial, since it is grounded in the belief that almost anything, including the most horrendous events imaginable, can be made entertaining. ♦

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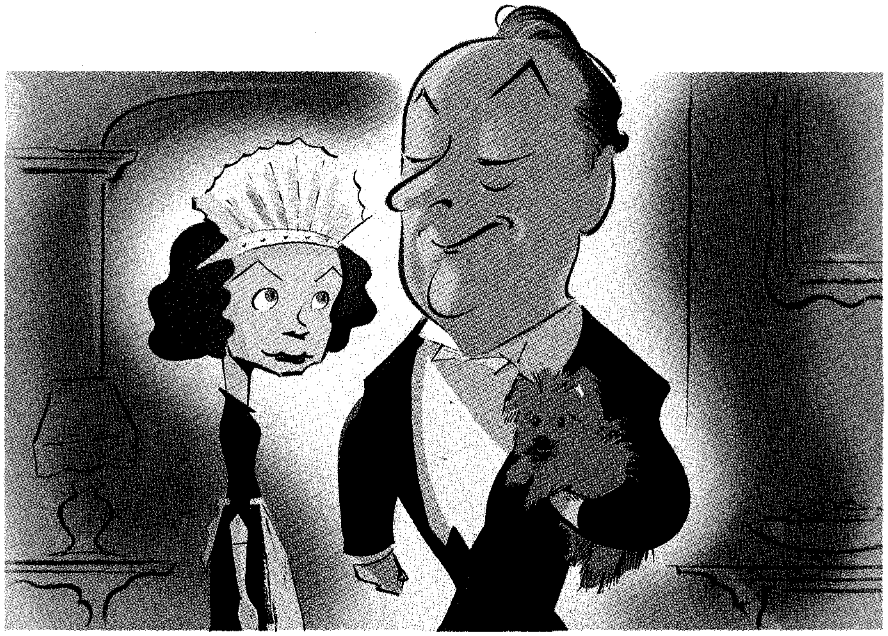
THE CURRENT CINEMA

CLASSVILLE

Robert Altman's "Gosford Park."

BY DAVID DENBY



Emily Watson and Michael Gambon, part of the extraordinary cast Altman assembled.

At the beginning of Robert Altman's brilliant comedy "Gosford Park," two Rolls-Royces, both heading for a weekend shooting party in the country, stop on a narrow road. The weather is vile in the usual English way—cold, gray, and wet—and the first car stops because its owner, Constance, Countess of Trentham (Maggie Smith), would like to warm herself but cannot open her thermos. Her new maid, Mary (Kelly Macdonald), is forced to come around from the front seat to open it for her. The second car, pulling up alongside, is driven by one Morris Weissman (Bob Balaban), of Hollywood, a producer of Charlie Chan movies. Next to him sits the handsome Ivor Novello (Jeremy Northam), a real-life British matinée idol, and in the back seat is Weissman's young valet (Ryan Phillippe), who stares insolently at Lady Trentham.

"Are you O.K.?" Weissman asks.

"Am I *what*?" she replies.

By affecting not to understand a common American locution, Constance fully intends to slight a Jew from the movie business. Later, seated in the drawing room at Gosford Park—an enormous estate owned by her niece's husband, Sir William McCordle (Michael Gambon)—Constance interrogates Novello about his latest movie, "The Lodger," which, she can't help pointing out, has not done very well at the box office. For her, the movies, like American slang, are something to be deplored, dismissed, even undermined. The year is 1932, and Constance, barely hanging on to her feudal prerogatives, knows very well that the art of the masses can have nothing but a levelling effect on English manners. Like the other members of the weekend mob at Gosford Park, Constance depends

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heavily on the largesse of Sir William, a school teacher's son who made his pile as a factory owner and bought his way into the aristocracy. Sir William is a rapacious old dog who has victimized some of the guests and some of the household staff, too. His wife, Lady Sylvia (Kristin Scott Thomas), detests him, and amuses herself with the better-looking male servants. She has quite a number to choose from: for the weekend party, there are, by my count, twenty-nine servants in attendance on fourteen people—and I'm not including the beaters, who chase pheasants through the brush.

Many of the guests arrive with their own help. How to keep the names straight? As Mrs. Wilson (Helen Mirren), the chief housekeeper, explains, the visiting servants, for simplicity's sake, will be known "belowstairs" by the names of their employers. For instance, Parks (Clive Owen), the handsome and self-possessed valet of Lord Stockbridge (Charles Dance), is known as Mr. Stockbridge. At dinner, the servants are arrayed according to their status. With a start, we realize that they have established their own class system, imitating the ranks and privileges—and humiliations—of their employers. The butler (Alan Bates) bullies the first footman (Richard E. Grant), who bullies the second footman (Jeremy Swift), and so on. In the course of the weekend, however, some of the servants assert who they are and what they want. A murder is committed, an act of personal vengeance that vibrates with decades-old class and sexual antagonisms.

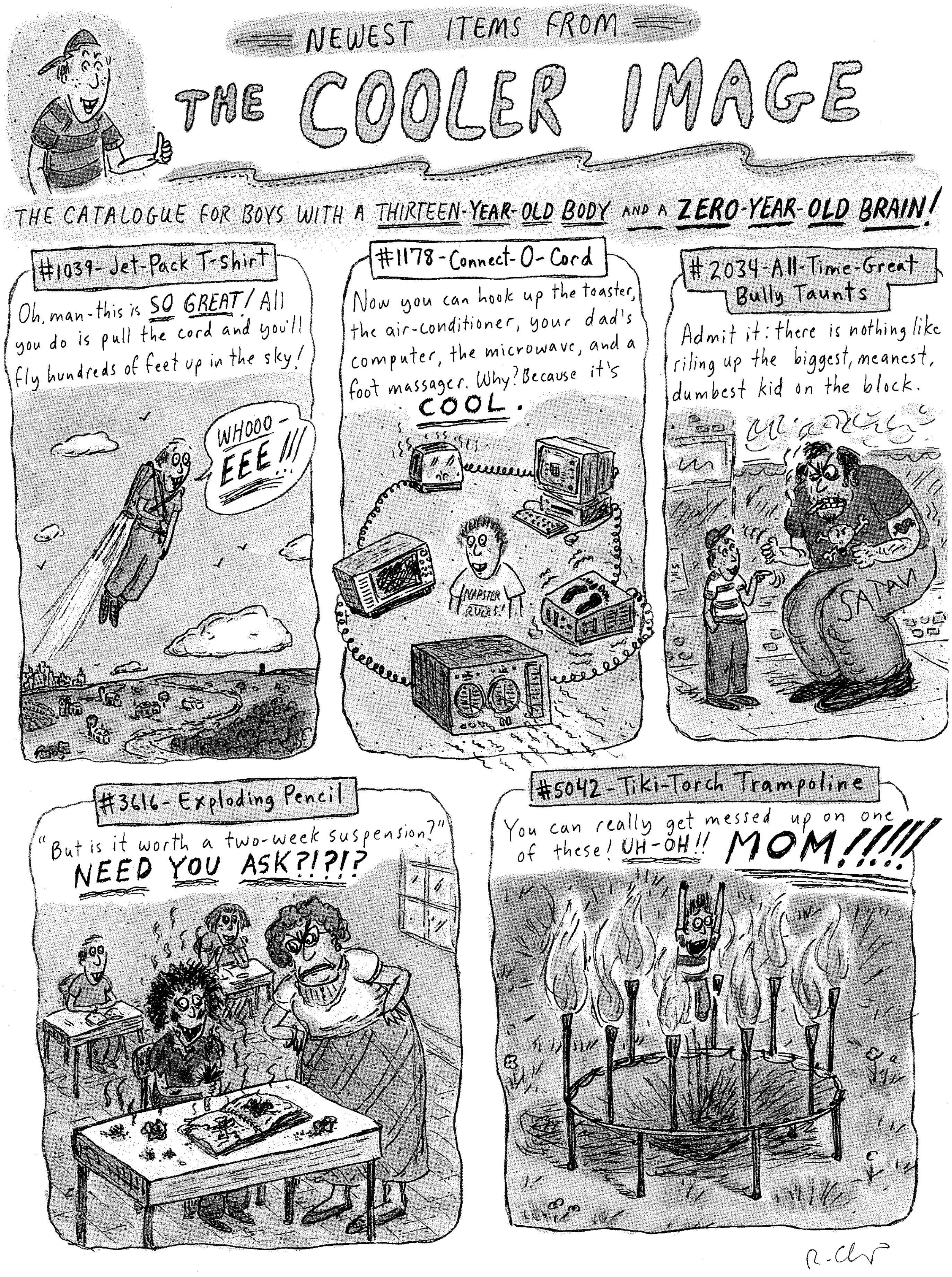
Not only are the Americans and the movies taking over but Hitler is coming, and, after the war, a Labour government, all of which will curtail the elaborate life of the great country estates. Yet "Gosford Park" is neither an elegy nor a Marxist attack. It's too bitter to be the first, too witty to be the second. The movie is a very high-style and amusing genre entertainment that, at the same time, has its roots planted deep in social reality. Call it an Agatha Christie house-party picture that reveals the intricacies of class and sex in a way that Christie never could. "Gosford Park" is based on an idea of Altman and Bob Balaban's and was written by the English actor and screenwriter Julian Fellowes, who is clearly a very talented man. The filmmakers begin by nesting comfortably in the most familiar of conventions. There's the large group of swells and underlings. There are motives and clues (knife, poison, shattered cup), a tomblike library, footsteps in the night—the entire creaking paraphernalia of the English murder mystery. Only this time nothing creaks. Instead, the movie flows with an almost erotic intensity from room to room, from upstairs to downstairs, from master to servant, from tender intimacy to public humiliation. All this traffic is selected and combined by the greatest flow-master in movie history.

In such films as "A Wedding," "Health," and "Short Cuts," Altman, operating in the American social vacuum, tried to pull the entire atmosphere and action out of his own perceptions. Those movies reflected the acid temperament of a cynic who saw through everybody and everything. At times, Altman didn't so much reveal his characters as expose them, and one could hardly enjoy the virtuosic way he combined and overlapped the movements of people who were already cut off at the knees. But in "Gosford Park" no one is cut off; all the characters, however briefly they appear, are fully limbed with histories, desires, habits, quirks. Working within the double frame of English manners and Agatha Christie, Altman holds his nastiness in check, and he pulls off something marvellous, just as he did in "M*A*S*H," "McCabe & Mrs. Miller," "Nashville," and "The Player": he achieves his dream of a truly organic form, in which everyone is connected to everyone else, and life circulates around a central group of ideas and emotions in bristling orbits. Altman shot much of the movie with two cameras going at once (Andrew Dunn is the cinematographer). In some scenes, he sticks to a fixed position, and two or three people talk, nattering away in a bedroom or in the pantry (the plot is borne aloft on a cloud of servants' gossip); in others, pairs of people separate from the crowd and migrate around a room as a moving camera picks up pieces of their snits, complaints, and jealousies. We may not understand all the allusions at once, but we hear fragments that we join with other fragments, and eventually the entire picture quite dazzlingly comes together: we see the power of money and the varieties of predatory behavior, the loyalties and betrayals. For all its bitchy veneer and murder-mystery structure, "Gosford Park" offers as full a view of a complex social milieu as we are likely to get in the movies.

The English actors that Altman has gathered seem utterly at ease playing monstrous or abject people. Perhaps that's because the English character is generally more pronounced than the American—theatricalism is inherent in English social life. For Americans, the upper-class combination of formality and brazen rudeness is genuinely shocking and perhaps unforgivable. But Altman and Balaban's view of the matter is ironic. In "Gosford Park," the Americans come off as friendly and democratic but insensible; they don't catch the tone of class distinctions. When they try to pretend that such things don't exist, they insult the upper and the lower orders. The movie slyly suggests that their coming rule will bring dullness to the world.

I don't know when there have been so many memorable performances in a single film. Charles Dance, as a withdrawn, half-deaf war hero, moldering in boredom, creates a character virtually without speaking; he merely leans irritably in the direction of whatever demand is made on him. Emily Watson, as the rebellious maid Elsie, who is having an affair with Sir William, lets the unruly life in her character burst right through a meek surface. She's the soul of the movie, but everyone is terrific, even the blond heartthrob Ryan Phillippe, whom Altman turns into a cherub-faced sex toy that anyone can play with. Much of the movie is ripely funny, and the murder itself plays as farce: the grateful widow happily assembles the guests for questioning; the detective is a bumbling fool. But, even when Altman jokes, he is working at deeper levels. When Jeremy Northam's Ivor Novello, sitting at the piano, entertains the guests with charming romantic songs, his voice drifts up into the house, and servants gather raptly on the stairs, and at the windows, as if basking in sunshine on a winter day. "Gosford Park" suggests that popular entertainment will eventually help liberate the lower classes. In the meantime, the old humiliations and sorrows grind away. The movie arrives at its climax with an astonishing burst of emotion, followed by reconciliation and peace. "Gosford Park" may chronicle a debonair weekend in the country, but, in the end, it offers something like catharsis. ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY ROZ CHAST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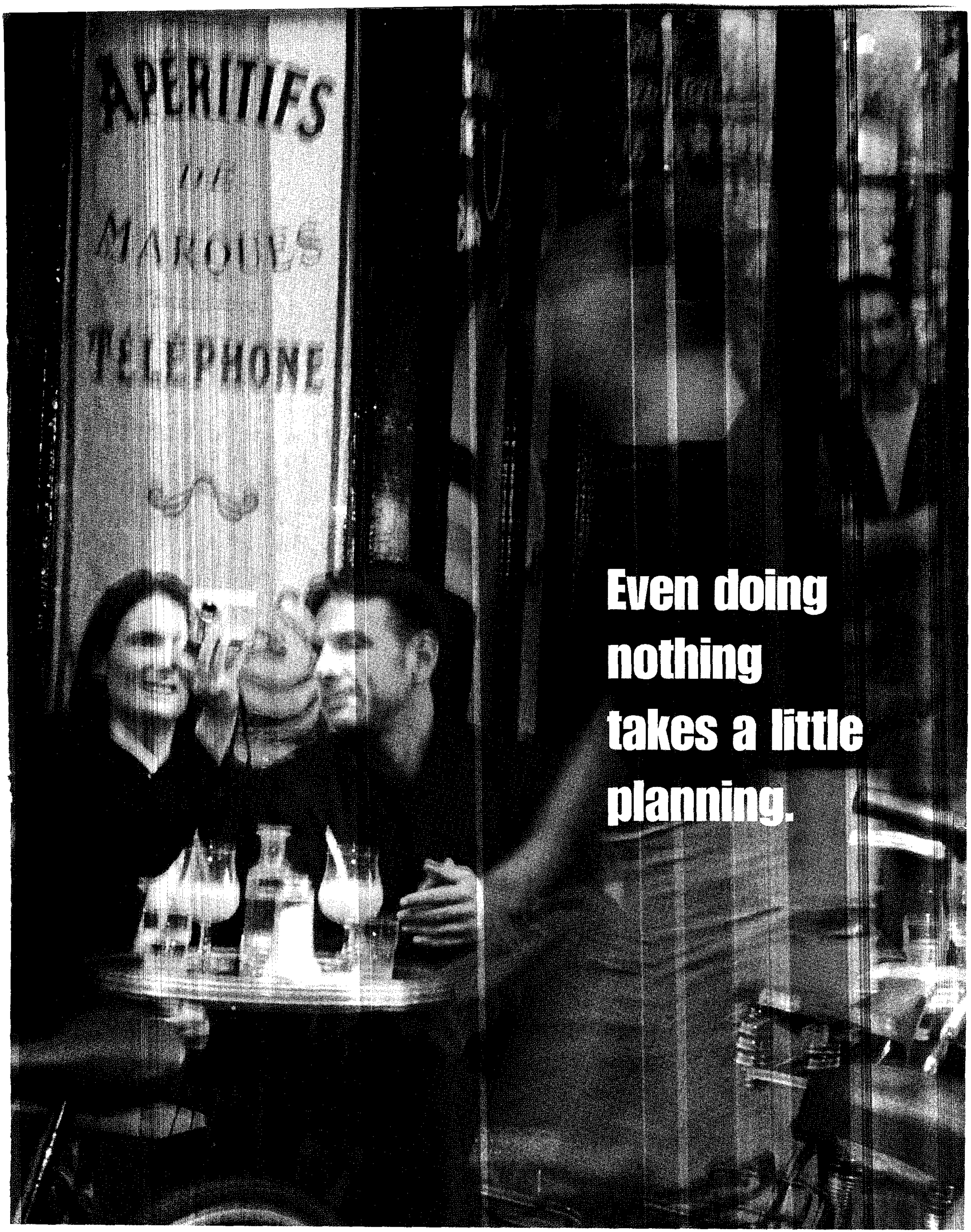
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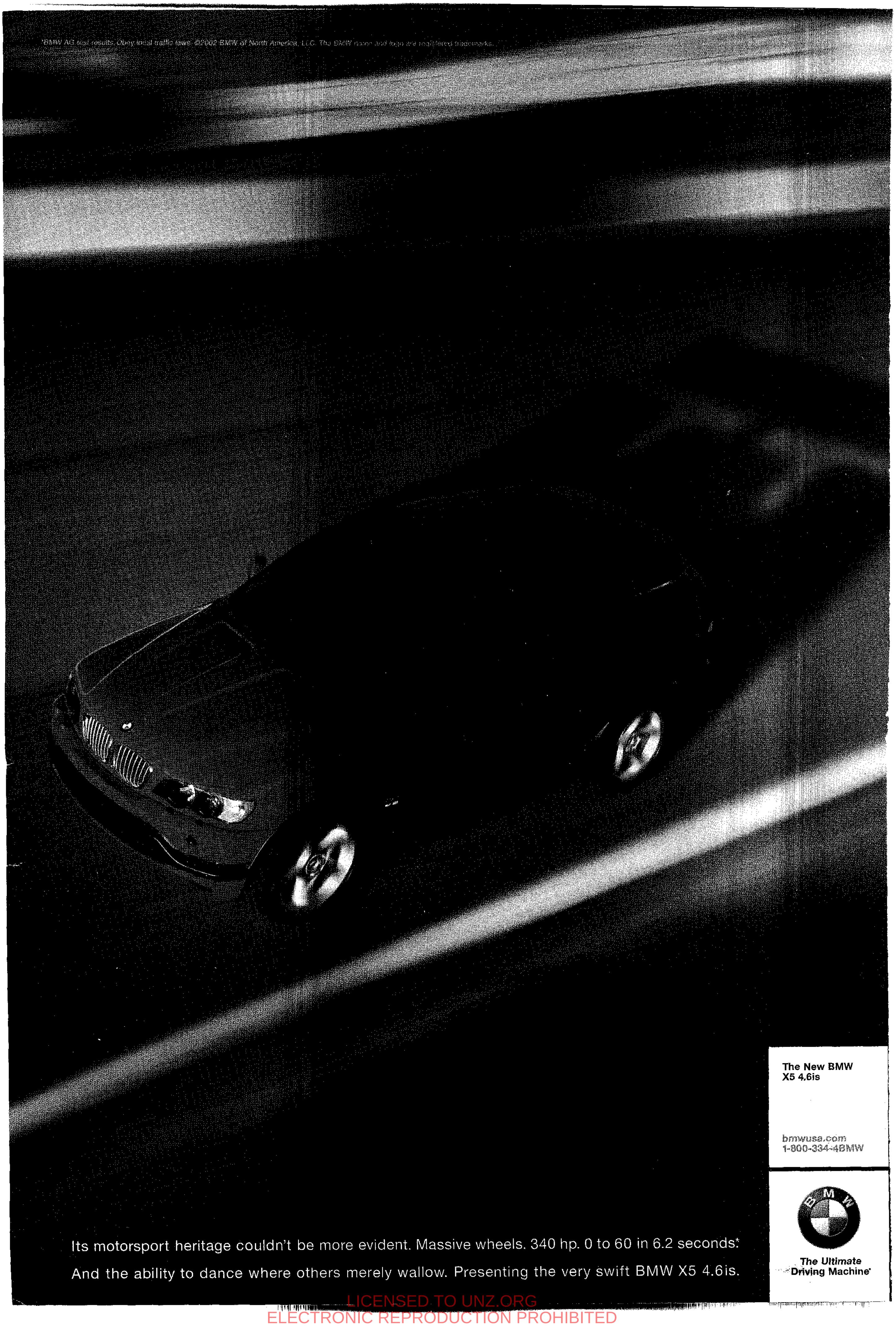
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